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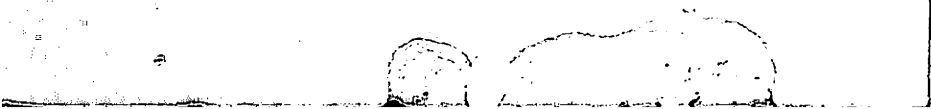
ADVAITA MAKARANDA

Translation & Commentary

ANN BERLINER

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Ann Berliner

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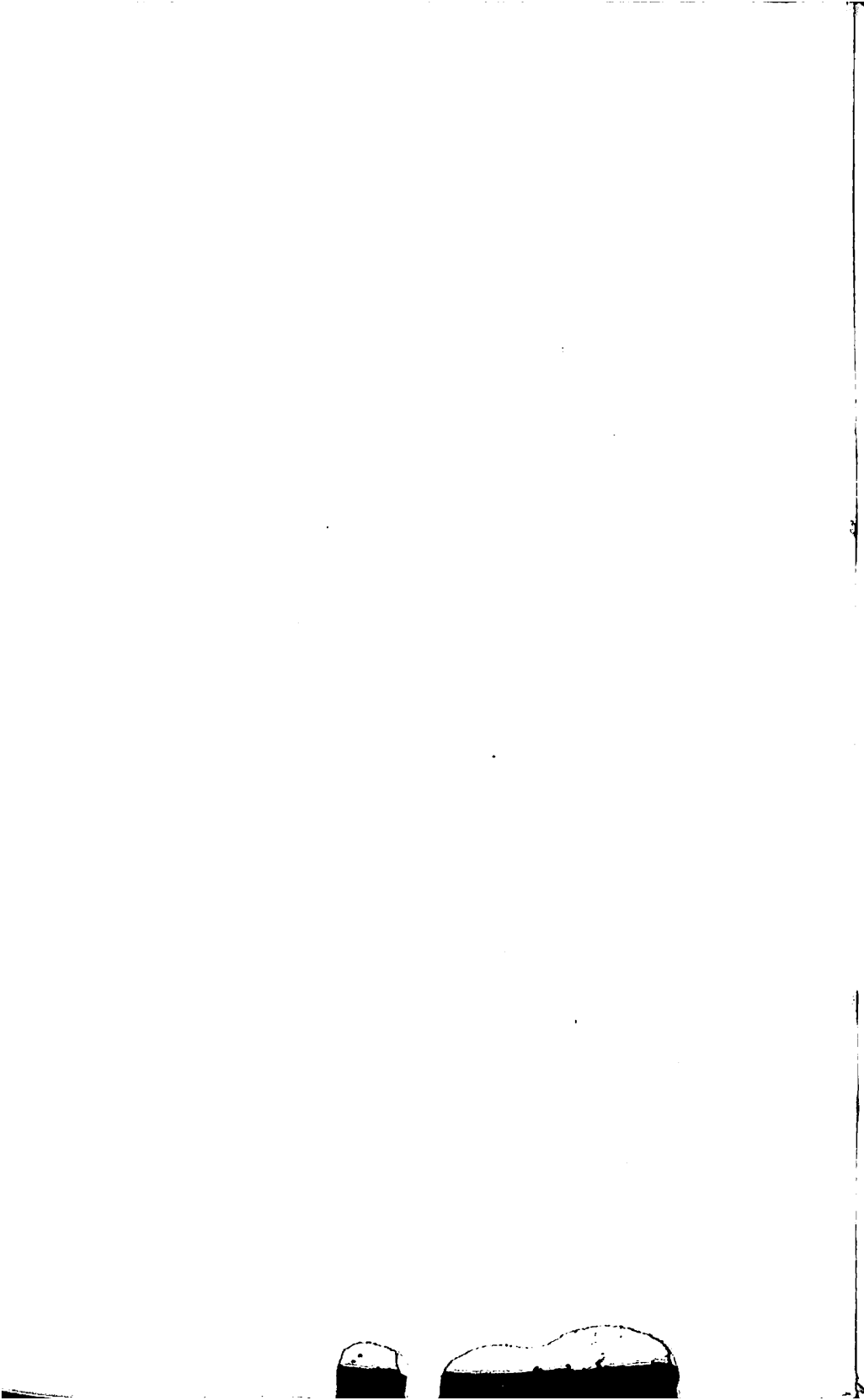
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Introduction

I. Text and Author

Advaita-makaranda is an obscure text written most likely between the 11th and 15th centuries by Lakṣmīdhara. He has written one other text, *Bhagavannāmaumudī* as well as a *ṭika* to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* called *Amṛtataraṅgiṇī*.

His exact dates cannot be fixed. Brahmānanda Bhāratī refers to *Advaita-makaranda* in his commentary to *Vākyasudhā*.

Bhāratī is also the author of *Puruṣarthaprabodha* to which Appaya Dikṣita refers in *Śivatatavivēka*. Since Appaya Dikṣita's dates are established as 1554 to 1626 A.D., we can assume that Lakṣmīdhara wrote prior to this time.

Bodhendra Sarasvatī in the second half of the 18th century states that Lakṣmīdhara was writing during the reign of King Bhojārāja in South India in the 11th century. This is not a confirmed fact but it gives a possible earliest date to which he can be placed.

If Lakṣmīdhara lived at the end of the 14th century, then he could have been a disciple of Śrī Vidyāraṇya, the author of *Pañcadaśī*. Although Lakṣmīdhara makes no reference to this fact, nor to his own teacher, such a hypothesis is possible. If this is so, then Lakṣmīdhara would have lived in South India in the 14th century in, what is today, Āndhra Pradesh.

II. Translation

Vedānta, literally the end portion of the Vedas, is viewed by the traditionalists as a *pramāṇa* (a means of knowledge) for gaining knowledge of the Self, and its relationship with the world and God. They argue extensively about the limitations and inappropriateness of the known means of knowledge i.e. perception, inference, etc.* for determining the Self. Their contention is that these means of knowledge are dependent upon a self-evident Being for their operations (*pravṛttis*). If ignorance about the Self exists, its removal is not subject to a knowledge gained by perception, etc.

Such knowledge can only be of things falling within the scope of one's objectification and analysis. The Self, being the Subject, doesn't fall within the range of perception-based inference. Their

* *Advaita Vedānta* categorizes the available means of knowledge into six divisions: 1) *pratyakṣa* (perception) 2) *anumāna* (inference) 3) *arthāpatti* (presumption) 4) *upamāna* (correlative knowledge) 5) *anupalabdhi* (knowledge of absence) 6) *śabda* (verbal testimony).

contention is that *śabda* is the *pramāṇa* for removal of ignorance centred on the Self. The traditionalists state that the Self is self-evident and requires no means of knowledge to prove its existence, yet to know its nature as free from duality *śabda* is the means.

Words, being relative by nature, cannot adequately reveal an absolute. Yet in order to gain knowledge beyond one's immediate sense perception, words are essential. If handled properly, they can point to a non-relative truth. One word is taken and all the various connotations of that word are explored and dismissed until the word is stripped bare of relative conditioned definitions. When all the conditioned meanings of the word have been removed, then that word reveals the Absolute.

Take for example, the word "eternal". It is an abused word. What is exactly meant by "eternal"? Do we mean that which is everlasting as opposed to that which is temporal or finite? The earth is eternal in contrast to man who is limited by a life span, but both the earth and man fall within the context of time and, thus, are limited by the time/space framework. This is to say that we are searching for a definition of eternal other than perennial eternity which is relative. The earth is perennial in relation to man. But neither is eternal. To fit the definition of eternal we must discover a meaning which is free of time. Anything within the creation by its very nature is going to be bound by time because it is subject to change. Anything that changes cannot be eternal. Therefore, there is no object which we can call eternal. An experience also, whether based on sense perception or transcendental meditations, is bound by the hands of time, finite in nature and subject to loss, for the experience is there at one moment and gone the next.

Therefore, eternal can neither apply to this creation nor to an experience, both things being bound by time. Then is "eternal" a concept totally imagined by man? Man in his limited state projects a notion of "eternal". This notion serves as a refuge from the despairing limitations he encounters. He makes an eternal afterlife to compensate for this temporal life. If this be so, if it be man's true nature to be ever bound and limited and all his notions of eternity are mere fabrications of his mind, then would he sincerely struggle to create and believe in these fabrications? If his true nature is limited, then why does he struggle so to discover something that is limitless? Nothing struggles to get away from its inherent nature. The struggle is always to get back a natural state of being. A fish on the beach in panic, struggles to get back to the ocean where it can

move and live naturally. If it is natural for one to be limited, if it is one's original state, would one struggle so to discover something "eternal", something free from limitation of time? If time-bound limitation were natural, then one would feel at home with this limitation. Since one struggles so desperately to be free of limitations, limitations then, cannot be natural.

Therefore, a timelessness, free of human fabrications must exist. If it did not, one would not seek it. But then if it is a "state of being", then it is an experience, as we have seen is not applicable to eternal. Then what is "eternal"? If it is not within creation then is it outside creation? If it is outside creation, then creation limits it; it cannot be "eternal" or infinite because it is limited by the existence of creation, thus making it finite. Therefore, the eternal must be inherent within the creation, yet free of the creation, and, therefore, free of change.

Through such analysis the vague notion of a word based upon subjective opinion is dismissed and the possibility of a timeless existence is revealed. The removal of invalid definitions of words is the method of teaching in Vedanta. In that process a valid meaning of the word is implied.

This process of negation and then assertion is the methodology of Vedantic teaching. The attempt in this translation is to recreate in English, the terse and logical impact of the Sanskrit verse. For this reason I have chosen the simplest definitions of each word. Imagery and poetic ambiguity are not desired here. Traditional Sanskrit poetry (*kāvya*) employing imagery and ambiguity creates subjective emotional responses within the reader. *Advaita Makaranda* is not of the tradition of *kāvya*. Therefore, metaphors illustrate logically established premises and are not used for the sake of imagery alone.

I have purposely avoided the misuse of such vague terms as "eternal", "soul", "spirit", "ego", etc. Such words, filled with cultural and psychological interpretations, can be misleading. In the first reading the verses may seem very simple, but it is a deceptive simplicity. The simplicity is only in the controlled lack of adjectives and not in the presentation of the subject matter.

A Sanskrit term translated into English will take on the ramifications of its English definition. One reads English, with his or her cultural definition of each word, and doing this, one may find correlations and comparisons between the concepts presented and one's own confirmed philosophical beliefs. Therefore, the method I've employed is a process of dilation of terminology. It is not a compilation of concepts but rather an unfoldment centred on the

definition of the Self.

In the body of the commentary I place myself in the position of a traditionalist and present the matter from a traditionalist's point of view. I have tried to understand this approach by the study of various Vedantic texts under the guidances of teachers who are part of the tradition. As is the wont with traditionalist, they resolve the subject matter of each verse into understanding of the limitless Self.

Since the purpose of Vedanta is *Aham Brahmāsmi* (I am Brahman), each commentary resolves into this postulate. Such resolution could best take place if the arguments were presented in the first person. The first person also maintains the immediacy of the teaching.

Within the tradition a particular argument is substantiated by quoting from the *Śāstra* (*Upaniṣads, Brahma-Sūtras, Bhagavad-Gītā*). I have emulated this classical approach by footnoting the philosophical arguments with quotations from the *Śāstra*.

Vedantic inquiry establishes the pattern of proposing a doubt and resolving it. The proposal of the doubt is called the *pūrvapakṣa*. The resolution of the doubt and the unfoldment of Vedanta is called *siddhānta*. In the *pūrvapakṣa* an objectionist's point of view is taken. Within the *siddhānta* one proceeds to dismiss the fallacies in the thinking of the opponent, and then unfolds the teaching of Vedanta. I have tried to follow this pattern of *pūrvapakṣa/siddhānta* in the presentation of the verses. The introduction to each verse presents the *pūrvapakṣa* while the verse and commentary reveal the *siddhānta*. When the verse is a continuation of the *siddhānta*, no *pūrvapakṣa* precedes it.

In order that I may appreciate the essence of *Advaita*, I have undertaken this work. My wish is to preserve the beauty of a tradition.

Verse One

Each text which elucidates Vedanta begins with a *maṅgala śloka* a verse to invoke the grace of the Lord. The invocation helps to secure a successful completion to the work. Traditionally, when any serious task is undertaken, one takes into account the unknown variable, grace, the presence of which can bless, and the absence nullify one's labour. This plus factor makes the difference between success and failure. In order for the task to have the desired result, one invokes the Lord's grace.

The Lord need not look full view at a person. Just a small glance from the corner of His eye sufficiently blesses an endeavour. If the Lord is taken as a shining sun then even one ray from the corner of His eye falls upon those who surrender to Him. They become the recipients of His grace.

कटाक्षकिरणान्त
नमन्मोहाब्ध्ये नमः
अनन्तानन्दकृष्णाय
जगन्मङ्गलमूर्तये ॥ १ ॥

Kaṭākṣakiraṇāncānta
Namanmohābdhaye namaḥ
Anantānandakṛṣṇāya
Jagannṁangalamūrtaye

My salutations to Lord Kṛṣṇa
Whose form is a blessing to the world
Who is limitless joy.
Whose glance from the corner of His eye
dries up this ocean of delusion
for those who surrender to Him.

The individual is constantly drowning in an ocean of delusion and suffering.¹ By surrendering at the feet of the Lord, he or she earns

1. कालः स्वभावो नियतिर्यदुच्छा
भूतानि योनिः पुरुष इति चिन्त्या
संयोग एषां न त्वात्मभावा-

दात्माप्यनीशः सुखदुःखहेतोः *Svetāśvataropaniṣad 1-2*

the Lord's glance.² From the ray of that glance the desire to be saved from the ocean is born. Motivated by this desire to be saved the individual seeks a teacher and from the teacher he or she gets Knowledge.³ The Knowledge eliminates ignorance and completely dries up the ocean of delusion.

The Lord, as a universal teacher (*sadguru*) has come to bless the world. He is a personification of boundless joy, a joy which is one's essential nature, as opposed to relative happiness, which is dependent upon circumstances. Unto Kṛṣṇa who is boundless joy, whose form is a blessing to the world, whose mere glance from the corner of His eye dries up this ocean of ignorance for all those who have surrendered to Him, unto that One I offer my salutations.⁴

2. यो देवानां प्रभवश्चोद्धश्च
विश्वधियो रुद्रो महर्षिः
हिरण्यगर्भं पश्यत जायमानं
स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुनक्तु *Ibid. IV-12*
3. तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्
समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् *Muṇḍakopaniṣad I-ii-12*
4. तं ह देवं आत्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं
मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये *Sverāśvataropaniṣad VI-18*

Verse Two

Every individual faces three fundamental problems : mortality, ignorance and lack of completion. An individual identified with the body concludes that the finality of the body is the finality of his existence. One's existence becomes limited to the duration of the physical body. Even if one identifies with the mind, one is limited by the multiple thoughts within the mind. If one discovers existence free from the body and mind then one discovers existence free from limitation. This discovery of limitless existence is the discovery of limitless Awareness and Fullness. The second verse begins to address these three fundamental problems and the subsequent verses further explain the answer.

अहमस्मि सदा भामि
कदाचिन्नाहमप्रियः ।
ब्रह्मैवाहमतः सिद्धं
सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणम् ॥ २ ॥

*Ahamasmi sadā bhāmi
kadācinnāhamapriyaḥ
Brahmaivāhamataḥ siddham
Saccidānandalakṣaṇam*

Always I am
Always I shine
Never am I an object of dislike to myself
Therefore it is established
That I am that *Brahman*
Which is of the nature of existence,
Awareness, and fullness.¹

The word "I" generally indicates the doer or the subject: "I am an enjoyer"; "I am happy"; "I am sad". I identify with these forms of experience by taking myself to be the very experience. For instance, when I say that I am happy, I take myself, an aware being, to be of the nature of happiness. But then, later on, when I say that I am sad, I take the same aware being to be of the nature of sadness. Thus, I

1. सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म *Taittiriyaopaniṣad II-i-1*

have identified myself with changing mental conditions.

These various thoughts which obtain in the mind are not myself because I know them and watch them come and go. None of them can be "I". For example, even though at one point I might decide or resolve something, I am not always in the process of deciding or resolving. Sometimes I am irresolute or doubtful. Therefore, the "I" cannot be defined by my decisions nor by my indecision, for they are constantly changing and in a state of flux. All of these changing identifications contradict each other, but one factor which does not change is the central thought "I am".

This consistent thought abides in all stages of life: "I am a child", "I am an adolescent"; "I am an adult"; "I am old". The stages change. Childhood does not remain, nor does adolescence, but the "I am" remains throughout life. Like a thread that strings the various transitions of growth together, the consistent thought "I am" links the child with the youth, the youth with the adult. Even though each of these stages is not the other, the observer of these changing conditions remains unchanged.

The "I am" is not an inert being, but it is aware. Anything known can be objectified, but the I (*aham*) which objectifies all modifications can never be known as an object. The world is. The world is known. The knowledge of the world is dependent upon my existence as the knower. Although the world which is known enjoys existence, this existence may not be as valid as I am, for what is known need not enjoy substantial existence. What is perceived may be apparent (*mithyā*). For instance, the rising sun, the blue sky, the dream — all are apparent perceptions. I cannot give valid existence to them.

If an object is to enjoy true existence, it cannot be dismissed at any time. Therefore, to say that something "is" or that the world "is" means that it must abide in all three periods of time; the past, the present, and the future. If reality is that which exists in the past, present, and future, then what degree of reality does this world enjoy?

The world which I perceived yesterday is not the world which I perceive today nor will perceive tomorrow. I perceive a creation of constant change, and each entity within the creation constantly changes. The forms of the creation are woven through the woof of time. So time itself dismisses the reality of the creation, for not one factor of the creation remains constant or real. Yet I do see a creation. What, then, enjoys a more lasting reality — the creation or the perceiver of the creation?

The world is and is known because I am aware. Even when the world changes, still I remain aware. My thoughts are included within the changing nature of the world, but behind the thoughts exists an aware perceiver. That which is seen but changing cannot be taken as real, whereas that which is changeless enjoys a greater degree of reality. Therefore, the world enjoys apparent existence only.

Appearance does, however, involve reality. If an object exists only apparently, then that appearance must be based on a substratum which does exist. In the darkness of twilight, if I mistakenly superimpose the image of a snake on a rope, then the snake exists because the rope exists. If the world is apparent, then upon what have I superimposed the apparent nature of the world? What is the independent substratum which supports this apparent existence? If I dismiss the world as changing, then what is left behind in that dismissal? I, the perceiver of the changes, am left behind. Everything else is gone. Which "I" is left? It is not the body "I", for the body is also included in the changing world as are various forms of thinking. They are all seen by me; they are all objectified by me. Therefore, the body along with all forms of thinking can be dismissed and still something remains.

One thing alone can remain. Awareness. The substratum for the world is myself. Awareness alone. Awareness cannot be dismissed. It abides, dismissing everything. Time and space can be dismissed, and still Awareness is. That which is not bound by time nor space but is the substratum for all that is within the framework of time and space; that alone shines. That alone exists. Therefore, always I am, and always I shine. I am not only the witness of the body, but of the whole world. I am the substratum.²

Although I may discover that the truth of myself is Awareness and the Awareness is the substratum for the whole world, still I find myself feeling incomplete and subject to sorrow. I crave a complete and happy self. How can knowledge remove the feeling of incompleteness? If sorrow or incompleteness were true to my nature, I would never try to get away from them. I would feel at home with my limitations. But I always want to shake them off and abide in fullness, for I love a self which enjoys happiness.

2. पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित्सा कांश्छा

सा परा गतिः

Kathopaniṣad I-iii-11

I never hate the self.³ I may hate someone because he or she gives me sorrow. Due to this pain I hate that person, whom I look upon as an enemy. But what I hate is not the person, but the pain that the person causes me. This pain takes me away from a joyful self. The hate is towards the loss of joy, not towards a person. I hate neither the person nor anything else. I hate sorrow because I cannot be happy with sorrow. I can be happy only with happiness. Sorrow is something which dismisses happiness. Therefore, I love happiness; I love a happy self.

Just as the object of my hate is sorrow, and not a person, so also the object of my love is not a person, but my fullness. When a person or object creates in my mind a certain condition, a certain disposition towards pleasure, that person or thing becomes an object of my love. The moment it begins to create disturbances in my mind, then I question whether the object is worth loving. Whom do I really love? I don't love the object at all. I love the sense of completion enjoyed in my mind. As long as that object is able to keep my mind away from conflicts, I love the object, for I find that the mind is all happiness. The moment an emotional disturbance begins in the mind I start to doubt the object. With a disturbance in my emotional makeup I think that the object disturbs me and I question the validity of my loving it. Then, slowly, I discover that it is not worth loving and I become cold or hateful. Therefore, if the object has to keep me loving all the time, then that object of my love should strive always to see that it does not create any disturbance in my mind. When that pleasing disposition is disturbed, the mind, being disturbed, will project the whole disturbance upon the object.

Each one loves oneself alone⁴ and is ready to give up everything else. All possessions are for myself alone. I love my house, but when it is a question of my life or the house, I keep myself and give up the house. If the choice is between the hand and the eye, I will retain my

3. यद्वै तत् सुकृतम्

रसो वै सः

रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वाऽऽनन्दी भवति *Taittirīyopaniṣad II-vii-1*

4. न वा अरे भूतानां कामया भूतानि

प्रियाणि भवन्ति आत्मनस्तु कामाय

भूतानि प्रियाणि भवन्ति । न वा अरे

सर्वस्य कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति

आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad II-iv-5*

eye and give up the hand. The eye is a sense organ, and it is closer to me. I love my sense organs more than a faculty of action. If the choice is between madness and a sense organ, then even the eyes are useless, for I will be seeing things that don't exist. Without eyes, let me be sane; for I love my mind more than my eyes. Then, within my mind, will I more readily give up an emotion or a conviction? I will give up an emotion first. If I am committed to an ideal, I will give up my family ties and emotional attachments in order to pursue that ideal. Therefore, I love my conviction, my intellect, more than my emotions. Now, do I love my deep Self, which gives me more joy than my conviction? I love my deep Self more, because if my conviction gives me sorrow, then I want to get rid of it. I want to have a better conviction. Therefore, I cannot bear my conviction if it stands against me. I can keep only that conviction in whose presence I can be comfortable.

What, then, is the thing I want most to do? I want to love myself the most. The most beloved is that deep, joyful Self. I love that Self because that Self is fullness.⁵

I never become hateful of my Self. If sometimes I hate myself, then which self do I hate? In fact, I love my Self, and that is why I hate myself. Within my mind I create in myself a split. One set of thoughts does not like the other set. That means I have an ideal personality and an actual one. The actual does not like itself but loves the ideal. I am not the ideal. Therefore, I hate the actual. Such a split carried to the extreme can lead one to suicide, because the actual personality happens to be in the same physical body as the ideal. Even committing suicide is motivated by self-love. The ideal is so distant from the actual that one will destroy the physical body as the ideal. If one cannot get along with the actual, then one gets rid of it — suicide.

No one hates oneself; everyone loves oneself. What I hate is sorrow and not a person, and what I love is, again, not a person, but completion, *ānanda*. Since I love myself the most, I must be that very *ānanda*, that total sense of completion.

The *Śruti* says that *Brahman* alone is completion and all happiness,

5. तदेतत्प्रेयः पुत्रात्, प्रेयो वित्तात्,
प्रयोऽन्यस्मात्सर्वस्मात् अन्तरतरम्
यदयमात्मा

Ibid. I-iv-8

and that this *Brahman* is also Existence and Awareness.⁶ Then that *Brahman* which is indicated in the *Śruti* must be identical with me.

6. सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म तज्जलानिति

Chândogyopaniṣad III-xiv-1

7. विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म यतिर्दातुं परायणम्
तिष्ठमानस्य तद्विद इति

Bṛhadâraṇyakopaniṣad III-ix-28-(7)

Verse Three

The vision of the *Śruti* erases the division between one's Self and the Total. The truth of myself is not separate from the truth of the Total.

Doubt:

The *Sruti*, however, points out that the Total, the *Brahman*, is all-knowing, and that it is the cause for the entire world. From *Brahman* the world has come and is sustained. If that is the nature of *Brahman*, then how can this individual, who does not even know his or her own physical body completely, be the same as that all-knowing Total? My knowledge is always limited in my capacity to create. In fact, I am not the sole author of anything. Since I depend upon so many factors — materials, ideas, I am incapable of creating anything independently. With all these limitations upon myself as an individual, how can I be identical with the Total, which is all-knowing and the cause of all?

मय्येवोदेति चिद्योमि
जगद्गन्धर्वपत्तनम् ।
अतोऽहं न कथं ब्रह्म
सर्वज्ञं सर्वकारणम् ॥ ३ ॥

*Mayyevodeti cidvyomni
Jagadgandharvapattanam
Ato'ham na katham Brahma
Sarvajñam sarvakāraṇam*

In me,
In the space of awareness
Rises the celestial city
Called the world.
Therefore, how am I not
Brahman, who is all knower
And the cause of all.¹

1. यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते
येन जातानि जीवन्ति
यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति
तद् ब्रह्मेति

Taittiriyaopaniṣad III-i-1

In the sky we can imagine a whole city made of clouds, but the city which we see is not there at all. We see a city imposed upon the space, and, as we watch, the imagined city changes, dissolves, and disappears.

The world which I see in Awareness enjoys the same reality as this city imposed upon the space. The dismissable world exists only apparently, but I, the seer, enjoy a more lasting reality than the changing world. As in a dream I see a world, but that dream world is projected by me alone. If I can project a world in the dream which I can dismiss when I am awake, then this waking world can also be dismissed when I go to sleep or when I dream. When the dream is seen, the waking world is not. Therefore, both states of experience, waking and dream, cancel each other. Neither of them can be said to have an absolute existence. Both of them are seen in the light of Awareness alone. Awareness illumines both the dream world and the waking world. In me, in the space of Awareness, I see the world as I would see a dream.

The perception of the world is accommodated within Awareness as all the objects of the world are accommodated within space. Whatever exists, exists with Awareness. The faculty of perception limits my capacity to see all objects, but Awareness, which illumines the perception, is not limited by that faculty. Although these two eyes cannot see all things, still the Awareness with which these eyes see accommodates all things.² My eyes may be limited. My mind may be limited. But Awareness suffers no limitation. Therefore, if *Brahman* is said to be the cause for the whole world and the truth of that *Brahman* is Awareness, then I, who am also Awareness am also the cause for the whole world.

In me, the whole world is.³ As I watch a city of clouds, I find it changing. I see a palace, then suddenly, the steps are gone. The sentries go, and I laugh at myself in amusement, thinking "What an imagination"! Nobody weeps for the loss of a palace of clouds. This

2. यच्चक्षुषि तिष्ठंश्चक्षुषोऽन्तरः, यं चक्षुर्न
वेद, यस्य चक्षुः शरीरम्, यश्चक्षुरन्तरो यमयति,
एष त आत्मान्तर्याम्यमृतः

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad III-vii-18

3. मय्येव सकलं जातं
मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्
मयि सर्वं लयं याति
तद्ब्रह्माद्वयमस्यहम्

Kaivalyopaniṣad V-19

waking world changes just as the clouds do. As I see it disappears. The world's very nature is change. Where does this constantly changing world exist? It exists in Awareness alone; therefore, why should I not say that the whole world is in me — in Awareness?

Since *Brahman* is said to be all-knower, how can the individual know everything? The limitations of the mind may be seen, but these limitations are not the Self. Awareness illumines these limitations but is never limited by them. From the standpoint of Awareness, there is no limitation. A clay pot looks 'as though' it limits space. There is space outside the walls of the pot and space within the pot. Thus, from the standpoint of pot, space looks 'as though' limited by the pot. From the standpoint of space, no limitation exists, for the pot abides within space. Space is in and through the walls, the form, of the pot. Similarly, the mind abides within Awareness. Awareness is in and through the mind. Awareness is not limited by the limitations of mind. My mind may be ignorant, my mind may not know various things, but the Awareness with which the mind knows, that Awareness illumines even the ignorance. Awareness is all-knowing. It is knowledge.⁴

4. यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद्यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः
तस्मादेतद्ब्रह्म नाम रूपमत्रे च जायते *Mundakopaniṣad I-i-9*

Verse Four

Doubt:

Still how can I be that *Brahman*? For *Brahman* is said to be eternal and I know that I am mortal. The mortal may try to be immortal, but it is not possible. The terms contradict each other. Since I know all the fears of mortality, I, the mortal individual, cannot be *Brahman*, which is eternal.

न स्वतः प्रत्यभिज्ञानात्
निरंशत्वान्न चान्यतः ।
न चाश्रयविनाशान्मे
विनाशः स्यादनाश्रयात् ॥ ४ ॥
Na svataḥ pratyabhijñānāt
Niramśatvānna cānyataḥ
Na cāśrayavināśānme
Vināśāḥ syādanāśrayāt

I am not destroyed by myself,
Because of continued remembrance.
Nothing else can destroy me,
For I am not in parts,
Nor do I depend on any basis,
Thus nothing can destroy me.

The nature of the Self is not subject to destruction.¹ In order for an object to be destroyed, there must be a connection between that object and the mode of destruction.² When that connection takes place, then the object is destroyed.

Three types of destruction are possible: (1) The object can destroy itself, (2) the object can be destroyed by another means of destruc-

1. न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चि-
न्नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित्
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे

Kāthopaniṣad I-ii-18

2. अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः

Bhagavadgītā II-24

tion, or (3) the basis or essence of an object can be destroyed, thereby destroying all the subsequent qualities. A flower decays in time, thus destroying itself; or one can pluck a flower and destroy it; or, thirdly, if the substance of which the flower is made is destroyed, then the flower is destroyed. If the wood of a chair is destroyed, then the chair, alongwith all its qualities, is destroyed. The wood is the essence, or the basis, of the chair; if that goes, then the chair is gone. Which of these three modes of destruction can destroy the truth of the individual, the Self?

First, can the Self destroy itself? To destroy itself, it must go through constant change; but does the Self change? The body changes. The cells in the body die and new cells are born each second. The body which I had a year ago is not exactly the one which I have now. Thus, the body is constantly destroying itself. Once I had a child's body; now, as an adult, I have an adult's body. When I am old, I will have an old body, but the same person who existed in the child exists in the adult and will exist in old age. Thus, the body is constantly changing, but the indweller of the body stays the same.

If there were not a consistent indweller of my body, then I would have no memory of the various stages of growth. Since I remember each stage I have a continued remembrance of the various stages. If the Self were changing, then there would be no memory. The continued remembrance depends upon a changeless Self. Therefore, the Self cannot be in a process of self-destruction as the body is, for if it were, then the changes of the body could not be recorded.

Within one day I have continued remembrance of a consistent existence. While I awake I know that "I am" and that I am aware of the world. While asleep to the waking world, I am aware of a dream world, and, even in deep sleep, Awareness is there. If Awareness did not abide throughout the experience of deep sleep, then, when I woke up, I would not be able to say that I was the one who slept. I would have no recollection of the sleep experience. Since I do get up and say that I dreamt or that I slept, then an observing entity must be present during the dream and during the sleep states. I, being aware, recall the dream or the experience of deep sleep.

यस्मादन्योन्यनाशहेतूनि भूतान्येनमात्मानं
नाशयितुं नोत्सहन्ते तस्मान्नित्यो
नित्यत्वात्सर्वगतः सर्वगतत्वात्स्थाणुः
स्थाणुरिव स्थिर इत्येतत्

Bhagavadgītā-Bhāṣya II-24

The Self, therefore, is a constant factor throughout all the states of experience — waking, dream, and deep sleep. If the Self were constantly changing, a recollection of these various experiences would not be possible. If one self goes and another comes, then there is no connection between the two selves; one is dead completely, and then a new one is born. If this were the case, no knowledge would be possible — no growth would be possible, for the self which was there a moment ago would not be the self which is there now. No learning could take place, for memory would not be possible. If this were the nature of the Self — to undergo change and thus be destroyed — then I would not be capable of any frame of reference to recall experience. Since there is a continued remembrance, for both learning and memory exist, then the Self must be a constant factor not subject to change or self-destruction.

Can I then, be destroyed by another factor? Can an external factor burn the Self and lift it and take it away? Can it be slain or shot? Can someone bomb the Self or strangle it? Can any of these various factors destroy the Self?

If the Self had a physical body, or any kind of form then that form could be destroyed. Space, being formless, cannot physically be destroyed. I cannot set fire to space or go after space with a sword in hand. All things abide in space, but space is not destroyed when the objects are destroyed, for space has no parts. Similarly, Awareness has no form, no limbs which can be destroyed, thereby killing it. Therefore, Awareness cannot be destroyed by another means of destruction.

Finally, if I can destroy my basis, my very essence, then I can destroy my Selfhood. If I take a piece of cloth and destroy the cloth, then the clothness, all the qualities which make up the cloth, is destroyed. Also, if I take a clay pot and destroy the clay, then the pot is or the essence of the pot, is gone. Therefore, if I can destroy the Self, then my Selfhood is also destroyed.

I can destroy the qualities of an object by destroying the essential material of the object. If the Self is dependent upon another essence for its existence, then, if I destroy that essence, I can destroy the Self. However, the Self is not a quality, nor is it dependent upon anything for existence. Awareness is the independent essence of everything. Awareness does not have any qualities, but I know all qualities because of Awareness. If Awareness had a quality then it would become an object, it is the subject, the observer of all objects. All other things depend upon Awareness, including time and space,

but Awareness does not depend on anything. Therefore, I, aware and independent, cannot be destroyed. If I cannot be destroyed, then I am not finite. I am infinite.

Only one entity is infinite and that we call *Brahman*. No second entity can be infinite. The existence of a second entity would mean that the first would become limited, because only one limitlessness can exist. If there were two, then one would limit the other and neither could exist limitlessly. Since only one limitlessness exists, then I cannot be different from *Brahman*, which is indestructible and infinite.

Verse Five

This verse elucidates further the impossibility of the Self to be destroyed.

न शोषप्लोषविक्लेद
च्छेदाश्चिन्नभसोमम ।

सत्यैरप्यनिलाग्न्यम्भः

शस्त्रैः किमुत कल्पितैः ॥ ५ ॥

*na śoṣaploṣavikleda
cchedāścinnabhaso mama
satyairapyanilāgnyambhaḥ
śastraiḥ kimuta kalpitaiḥ*

Space cannot be
Dried, burnt, drowned, nor stabbed
Yet air, fire, water, and weapons
Are as real as space itself.
Then, how can these destroy me
When they are imposed
Upon my space of awareness

The wind cannot dry up space, nor can fire burn it, nor can water drown it.¹ Space allows the wind to move within it, it allows fire to burn and water to flow. Although these elements can cause destruction to other objects, they cannot destroy the space within which they abide.

If space cannot be destroyed by any of these weapons which are as real as space itself, the Awareness, which objectifies space, cannot be destroyed either. From the standpoint of Awareness, these modes of destruction are apparent. Since they are apparent, they have no bearing on Awareness, which is real.² If there is no connection between the weapon of destruction and the object which is to be destroyed, then destruction cannot take place. As the destruction of

1. नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः *Bhagavadgītā ii-23*

2. महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति *Kāthopaniṣad I-ii-22*

his shadow will not destroy the man, or the destruction of the face in the mirror will not harm the real face, so, too, any weapon of destruction exists apparently and only destroys apparent objects; it cannot destroy the true Self.

Verse Six

Doubt:

The experience of the individual is limitation. I am defined by the boundaries of this body. I am here, not there. Pain to this body is pain to me. Destruction of the body destroys me. Perhaps there is a *Brahman* which is all-pervasive and the cause of the whole world but my experience is limitation. Therefore, the identity between me, the limited, and that which is limitless seems dubious.

अभारूपस्य विश्वस्य

भानं भासंनिधेर्विना

कदाचिन्नावकल्पेत

भा चाहं तेन सर्वगः ॥ ६ ॥

abhārūpasya viśvasya

bhānaṁ bhāsaṁnidhervinā

kadācinnāvakalpeta

bhā cāhaṁ tena sarvagaḥ

Never is the insentient world known

Without its contact with Awareness.

I am that Awareness,

Which is all-pervasive.

An opaque object cannot be seen without a light source. I cannot see objects in darkness. Similarly, the entire world cannot be seen without a source of light. A sentiency which illumines the luminary must also be present in order for the luminary to be seen. The moon, the sun, the stars — any object, no matter how distant — is known by the light of Awareness. An object far away, such as a star, is bathed by Awareness. The object may be far from my physical body, but not from Awareness. As my physical body falls within Awareness, so does the distant star. Both are perceptions and both perceptions take place because Awareness illumines the capacity to perceive. As my body is insentient without the sentient Awareness to illumine it, so too this whole world is inanimate without Awareness to illumine it.¹ Since I am the one who illumines the entire world, I am all-

1. तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं

तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति *Kaṭhopanīṣad II-ii-15*

pervasive. This "I" is not the historical I nor the physical "I", but the I without history. I am sentiency and everything shines within me.

When I say I am here and not there, I say it only in reference to the physical body, but definitely not in reference to myself, for I, Awareness, am all-pervasive.

Verse Seven

Doubt:

To say that I am identical with that *Brahman*, which is the limitless, is untenable, because it is not established that there is a limitless. To establish this identity I must accept the concept of the limitless. If *Brahman*, the limitless, is free of time, space and qualities, then it is nonexistent, because I cannot find anything which exists free from the time-space framework. I have no means of knowledge even to assume that there is an existence free from this framework.

This world bound by time and space seems definitely real to me. I cannot dismiss it. A limitlessness, free from time and space, seems totally imagined to me. The world is there as I am here, distinct and limited. The world is different from me, as the chair is different from me. I know only duality — myself and the objectified world. I do not find a non-dual existence anywhere. My means of knowledge, my sense of organs with which I take in the world, report to me only duality. My eyes are distinct from the objects which they see. I cannot have the knowledge of a non-dual existence, for I see and know duality only.

न हि भानादृते सत्त्वं
नर्ते भानं चितोऽचितः ।

चित्संभेदोऽपि नाध्यासा-

दृते तेनाहमद्वयः ॥ ७ ॥

*na hi bhānādṛte sattvaṁ
narte bhānaṁ cito'citaḥ
citsambhedo'pi nādhyāsā
dṛte tenāhamadvayaḥ*

Without Awareness, sentiency,
An insentient object cannot be known.
The contact of the sentient and
The insentient is not possible
Without superimposition.¹
For this reason,
I am non-dual.

1. युष्मदस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरयोर्विषयिणोस्तमः

प्रकाशवद्विरुद्धस्वभावयोरितरेतरभावानुपपत्तौ सिद्धायाम्

*Brahmasūtra
Sāṅkara-Bhāṣya*

In order for an object to exist, it must have the faculty of being "knowable" — meaning that I must be able to know the object. An object in and of itself does not have the characteristic of "knowability". The "knowability" of the object is dependent upon sentience or my awareness of the object. If the insentient is dependent upon sentience for its existence, then what kind of dependency is this? What relationship can exist between the insentient and the sentient? Where the insentient is, sentience cannot be, as where there is darkness, light cannot be. Light and darkness cannot coexist. Therefore, simultaneous existence between the sentient and the insentient is not possible.

Yet I am a sentient being within an insentient world. The objects present themselves to me. How can I reconcile this paradox of being sentient within the insentient world, since sentience and insentience cannot possibly exist together?

Without sufficient light I may superimpose the images of a snake on the form of a rope. The snake and the rope have no valid relationship at all, for one exists and the other does not. No relationship is possible because there is only one object. A relationship connotes duality, but no duality exists in the case of the rope and the snake. One is apparent and dismissable, whereas the other is real. the apparent is a superimposition² upon the real.

The insentient world is superimposed upon the sentient Awareness. The world, like the snake, is apparent, a projection upon myself, the Awareness. When I dismiss the apparent world, I alone am real. The world and myself are not two. There is only one Awareness. Therefore, I, Awareness, am non-dual nature of the Self — the dual world being the super-imposition.³

2. इत्यतः अस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरे विषयिणि
चिदात्मके युष्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरस्य तद्धमाणां चाध्यासः *Ibid*
3. तत्रैव सति यत्र यदध्यासः तत्कृतेन
दोषेण गुणेन वा अणुमात्रेणापि स
न संबध्यते



Verse Eight

Doubt:

How can I be non-dual Awareness? My experience contradicts such a statement. Through experience I ascertain myself. I am a human being. I am fat or thin; I am hungry or thirsty; I see and touch. All of these are my personal experiences. If I am Awareness and Awareness is non-dual, then I no longer have the experience of hunger. Yet, I know hunger more definitely than I know non-duality. Perhaps through logic one can prove the existence of a state of non-duality, but logic can arrive at a conclusion which is entirely contradictory to personal experience. Such logic I can only take as speculative philosophy which is not going to aid me or make me free of limitations.

न देहो नेन्द्रियं चाहं
न प्राणो न मनो न धीः ।
ममतापरिबद्धत्वा-
दाक्रीडत्वादिदांध्यः ॥ ८ ॥
na deho nendriyam cāham
na prāno na mano na dhīḥ
mamatāparirabdhavā-
dākṛīdatvādidamndhiyaḥ

Not the body,
Not the sense organs,
I am not the breath,
Nor mind, nor intellect.
They are seen as mine,
A play of the mind.
They are known as "this".

My personal experience is that I am this body; therefore I am fat or thin, black or white, and I undergo all the pains and enjoyments of the body. But which I objectify is definitely not me. the object can be owned by me, but the owner is distinct from the owned. I say "my" body; it is a possession. The possession is not the possessor. My body is an object of my possession and distinct from me, the possessor. The physical body is not the owner, but it is the object

owned. My mind takes myself to be *this* body. When I use the demonstrative pronoun *this*, then I have objectified the noun. I do not refer to myself as "this", but I refer to all nouns that can be objectified as "this". Since I can say "this body" or "this breath" or "this mind" or "this intellect", then I have objectified all of these qualities and they cannot be me, the subject. I know this body because I am aware of different sensations which take place within this body. I know this breath because I am aware of the act of breathing. I know this mind because I am aware of the various thoughts. Since I can objectify each component of my individuality, I cannot take it to be the truth of myself, but only an objectification which is not the subject. For these two reasons, objectification and ownership, all that is "this" cannot be me.¹

Just as I can see a clay pot, knowing it to be distinct from me, and I call it "this pot", so too the body is distinct from me and is known as "this". Just as I can have a coat on and say "this coat", so too I have a body and I say "this body". Sometimes I wear the dress of the heart and assume myself to be my emotions. When I am pensive, I assume myself to be the intellect.² All the different parts of my individuality are roles within a play. An actor knows himself to be distinct from the role he plays; the various identifications are not real but are a play of the mind.

If I acknowledge the fact that the body, the sense organs, the mind, and the intellect are different parts of the individual, then am I to assume that the assemblage of these parts makes a whole individual? No, if the body is an object which I own, as are the sense organs and the mind, then how can the composite of these owned objects ever become me, the owner? All that which is seen as mine can never be me, but is only the costumes which I assume.

1. स एष नेति नेत्यात्मा *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* IV-v-15

2-Verses 15-23 of the third section, seventh chapter of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* negate the various components of individuality as not being the Self. I have chosen verse 22 to serve as a sample for the section.

यो विज्ञाने तिष्ठन्विज्ञानादन्तरः

ये विज्ञानं न वेद, यस्य विज्ञानमन्तरो यमयति

एष त आत्मान्तर्याम्यमृतः

Ibid. III-vii-22

Verse Nine

Doubt:

If all the parts of my individuality are merely costumes which I assume, then who am I? If I am to feel confident with my identity, then it must fall within my personal experience. My body, my sense organs, my mind are all within my personal experience. If I am not the body, nor my mind, then I must be one thought which owns the body and the mind. I am not all of the various modifications of the mind, but I am one basic thought which subsumes the identity with all the others. I am limited by the body and by the mind; the truth of myself must be the identification with these limitations.

साक्षी सर्वान्वितः प्रेया-
नहं नाहं कदाचन
परिणामपरिच्छेद
परितापैगरूपलवात् ॥ ९ ॥

*sākṣī sarvānvitah preyā-
naham nāham kadācana
pariṇāmapariccheda
paritāpairupaplavāt*

I am
The witness
In all experiences,
And I am
All joy.
Falsely
I am connected
With change,
Limitation,
And sorrow.

I am the one who is independent of all things that are seen. I am a witness to all states of experience. In deep sleep, when I am not identified with my body nor my mind, I do not have mental or physical limitations. Yet, I am there. I witness the experience of sleep. When the mind resolves in deep sleep, I have the experience of total ignorance, of not knowing anything. As Awareness, I am

there during that experience. Only my mind is in darkness — no objectification is taking place. When I awake and my mind begins objectifying again, then I say that I was asleep. In order to say that I was asleep, I have to be aware of the experience of sleep. To be aware of this experience means that I witness the sleep. I am there as Awareness witnessing the experience of sleep. Awake, in dream, or in deep sleep, I am the witness of all experiences.¹

When my mind resolves in deep sleep there is no *ahamkāra*, or basic thought subsuming identity of all others. Even though I have no thought in that experience, still "I" remain. The "I" which witnesses the experience of deep sleep is not dismissed by any experience, but the "I" which identifies with all forms of physical and mental limitations is dismissed by the experience of sleep.² Therefore, the "I", the witness, is the truth behind all experience, but the limited "I" which identifies with experience is notional.

Experiences are always changing, and an experience by its very nature is bound by limitation. The experience begins, is sustained, and ends. Even if the experience is one of pleasure, still it is backed by sorrow, because it will end and in its parting, pain comes. To identify with experience is to identify with change, limitation, and sorrow.

When I see that I am the witness behind all experience then I know that I am all joy, never subject to loss or parting. I have no fear of nonexistence, for always I am. Free of fear, I am joy. Identified with experience, I am full of fear. Notionally, the *ahamkāra* identifies with the experience, and this notional "I" has all the opposite qualities from the truth of myself. If I identify with experience, then I am always changing, completely limited, and subject to sorrow. When I witness experience, then the change is seen by me, the observer. I am not connected to the qualities of change and limitation. I watch them come and go. I am a witness.

1. त्रिषु धामसु यद्भोज्यं भोक्ता यश्च प्रकीर्तितः
वेदैतदुभयं यस्तु स भुञ्जानो न लिप्यते *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad/Kārikā I-5*
2. तद्यत्रैतत्सुप्तः समस्तः सम्प्रसन्नः स्वप्नं
न विजानात्येष आत्मेति *Chāndogyaopaniṣad VIII-xi-1*

Verse Ten

Doubt:

Witnessing is an experience. I experience the act of witnessing. Therefore, the truth is the *ahamkāra* (the "I notion") which identifies with experience and change.

सुप्तेऽहमि न दृश्यन्ते
दुःखदोषप्रवृत्तयः ।
अतस्तस्यैव संसारो
न मे संसर्तृसाक्षिणः ॥ १० ॥
*supte'hami na drsyante
duhkadoṣa pravṛttayaḥ
atastasyaiva saṁsāro
na me samsartṛsākṣiṇaḥ*

In sleep
Anxieties
Desires
Are not seen.
Changes are for
The changing self,
Not for me
Who sees the change.

In sleep all the desires, all the anxieties, all the ways of dividing up the world into pockets of likes and dislikes are not there.¹ I can exist free of these limitations, for these limitations belong to a notional self, the *ahamkāra*.² If I feel that I am only the *ahamkāra*, that I am

1. तद्वा अस्यैतदतिच्छन्दा अपहतपाप्माभयं रूपम् *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad IV-iii-21*

2. यथा सोम्य मधु मधुकृतो निस्तिष्ठन्ति
नानात्ययानां वृक्षाणां रसान्समवहारमेकतां
रसं गमयन्ति
ते यथा तत्र न विवेकं लभन्तेऽमुष्याहं
वृक्षस्य रसोऽस्मीत्येवमेव खलु सोम्येमाः
सर्वाः प्रजाः सति सम्पद्यन् विदुः
सति सम्पद्यामह इति

Chāndogyopaniṣad VI-ix-2

never free from the limitations of my life, then I have not sufficiently discriminated between myself and the notions encrusted around my existence. A clear crystal will seem red when it is put near a red flower or change to green when put next to a leaf. A discerning eye, however, will know that the crystal appears as though changing colour but the truth of the crystal is pure and clear.³ As an individual within the world I appear as though limited by the limitations of my individuality, I am free of limitation. The notions of limitations belong to the *ahamkāra*, but not to me.

As a witness I do not perform action. My mind perceives experience, but the perception of that experience is illumined by and actionless Awareness. As a light illumines all the activities which take place on a stage and yet it is never the actor, so too the Awareness illumines all the changing activities of my mind, yet it never acts. The *ahamkāra* identifies with action, whereas the Awareness illumines the activity of the *ahamkāra*. I can objectify the action of the *ahamkāra*. If I can objectify it, then it cannot be me, the subject, for I am the witness of the changing *ahamkāra*.

3. अस्मदादेरेव सूक्ष्मबुद्धेः पण्डितस्य सुविज्ञेयोऽयमात्मा
स्थितिगतिनित्यानित्यादिविरुद्धानेकधर्मोपाधिकत्वाद्विरुद्धधर्म-
वत्त्वाद्विश्वरूप इव चिन्तामणिवदवभासते

Kāthopaniṣad I-ii-21
Śāṅkara-Bhāṣya

Verse Eleven

Doubt:

Perhaps all my anxieties and limitations, my likes and dislikes resolve at the time of sleep, but then so do I. Sleep is, and at that time I am a sleeper. I am not aware of anything. Thus, Awareness itself resolves in the state of sleep.

सुप्तः सुप्तिं न जानाति
नासुप्ते स्वप्नजागरौ ।
जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तीनां
साक्ष्यतोऽहमतदृशः ॥ ११ ॥

*suptaḥ sūptim na jānāti
nāsupte svapnajāgarau
jāgratsvapnasusuptinām
sākṣyato'hamatadrśaḥ*

A sleeper
Does not objectify sleep.
But one who is free from sleep
Is free from waking and dream
And is the witness of all three states.
Therefore, I am free from all states of
experience.¹

I am not always a sleeper. When I wake up, I dismiss the state of sleep. When I dream, I dismiss both the waking and sleep states. The waking state negates the sleeper, as the dream negates the waker, and sleep negates the dreamer. Each state of experience cancels another one. I am not an absolute dreamer, nor an absolute waker, not an absolute sleeper. At various times I sleep or dream or am awake. Who exactly goes into sleep and comes out again, or dreams and wakes again?

Since I change from sleeper to waker, there must be a changeless

1. नान्तः प्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं नोभयतः प्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञानघनं
न प्रज्ञं नाप्रज्ञम् । अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणमचि-
न्त्यमव्यपदेश्यमेकात्मप्रत्ययसारं प्रपञ्चोपशमं
शान्तं शिवमद्वैतं चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते स आत्मा
स विज्ञेयः

Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad 7

Self which does not undergo the experience of change. In sleep I do not perceive any experience because my mind, being resolved, is not available for objectification of experience. Although no experience is perceived, still I am existent.² I do not cease existing during sleep. The "sleepership" or "wakership" belongs to the modifications of the mind, but not to me who is aware of the modifications. If I were only a waker, then I could not become a dreamer or a sleeper. Since I know all of these states of experience, then I cannot, solely, be any one of them. Since I am not any of them, I am free from all of them. I do not really become the waker, nor the dreamer, nor the sleeper. The *ahamkāra* identifies with the different states of experience, but I, the witness of the *ahamkāra* am free from all states of experience.

2. यद्वै तन्न पश्यति पश्यन्वै तन्न पश्यति,
 न हि द्रष्टुर्दृष्टेर्विपरिलोपो विद्यतेऽविनाशित्वात् ।
 न तु तद् द्वितीयमस्तिततोऽन्यद्विभक्तं
 यत्पश्येत्

Verse Twelve

By further analysis of the three states of experience, I see that I am distinct from these states.

विज्ञानविरतिः सुप्ति-
स्तज्जन्म स्वप्नजागरौ ।
तत्साक्षिणः कथं मे स्यु-
र्नित्यज्ञानस्य ते त्रयः ॥ १२ ॥

*vijñānaviratiḥ supti-
stajjanma svapnajāgarau
tatsākṣiṇaḥ katham me syur-
nityajñānasya te trayaḥ*

In sleep
The knowledge of various objects resolves.
While I am dreaming or awake,
The knowledge of various objects manifests.
How can I be these three states of experience,
For I am always Awareness
And always the witness.

Knowledge of particular objects is called *viśeṣa vijñāna*. This particular knowledge is available in the dream and waking states, where we perceive various objects. Awake we may see a mountain or a river, as we would see the same objects in a dream. In deep sleep we neither see the definite objects of the waking world, nor do we perceive a dream world.¹ While we are asleep, the knowledge of various objects resolves, for sleep is a consistent state in which there is a consistent negation of particular knowledge.

Since particular knowledge is the common experience while either dreaming or awake, then these two states are similar. the waking objects seem to enjoy a more lasting existence, for I return to them daily, whereas the dreamt objects are more ephemeral and

1. स्वप्ने स जीवः सुखदुःखभोक्ता
स्वमायया कल्पितजीवलोके
सुषुप्तिकाले सकले विलीने
तमोऽभिभूतः सुखरूपमेति

Kaivalyopaniṣad 13

endure for a shorter period of time. the waking objects are seen as being external to my sense organs, whereas the dream objects are internalized.² In both states the objects are bound by time and are known because I objectify them. However, both the dream and the waking states are comparable because the knowledge of various objects manifests.

While asleep there is no objectification. The difference, then, between the two distinct states. waking/dream and sleep, is only a thought modification. In waking or dream there is the thought modification of duality — my mind perceives objects. In sleep, duality is not there.³ In order for the thought modification to come and go, there must be an observer who witnesses the absence and presence of the objectifying mind. I know that sleep comes, then waking comes. To have this knowledge I must be there, present during the resolution of the mind. The mind resolves — sleep. The mind returns — I call it waking. Therefore, the states of experience change, but Awareness remains as the observer. As the observer I am not really involved in waking, or in dream, or in deep sleep.⁴ In Awareness all these three states of experience take place.

Awareness cannot go. If it did then there must be something to witness that, then that thing must be sentient; it must be aware. If it is awake, then it is Awareness. So Awareness will always be the constant behind the coming and going of all things. A thought is born, but it is born in Awareness. Awareness is never born, but always is. Since the three states of experience come and go, they cannot be me, for I am always Awareness and always the witness.

2. स्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तःप्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग
एकोनविंशतिमुखः प्रविविक्तभुक्तैजसो
द्वितीयः पादः

Māṇḍukyopaniṣad 4

3. यद्वै तत्र विजानाति विजानन्वै तत्र
विजानाति, न हि विज्ञातुर्विज्ञातेर्विपरिलोपो
विद्यतेऽविनाशित्वात् न तु तद्वितीयमस्ति
ततोऽन्यद्विभक्तं यद्विजानीयात्

Bṛhadarāṇyakopaniṣad IV-iii-30

4. पुरत्रये क्रीडति यश्च जीवस्ततस्तु जातं सकलं विचित्रम्
आधारमानन्दमखण्डबोधं
यस्मिँल्लयं याति पुरत्रयं च

Kaivalyopaniṣad 14

Verse Thirteen

Doubt:

If the Self is a witness, an observer, then why do I undergo a change? I keep changing. I was a child, then an adolescent, now an adult, and soon I will be old. If I were a witness, then I would not undergo these changes. Since I undergo these changes, I do not think that I am a witness. The Self which undergoes changes alone is true.

षड्विकारवतां वेत्ता
निर्विकारोऽहमन्यथा ।
तद्विकारानुसंधानं
सर्वथा नावकल्पते ॥ १३ ॥

*ṣaḍvikāravatāṁ vettā
nirvikāro'hamanyathā
tadvikārānusaṁdhānaṁ
sarvathā nāvakalpate*

I am the knower of the six-fold
modifications.
Since I know them,
I am free from them,
If I were not free from them,
I could not know them.

Each individual, each living creature goes through six definite modifications. the first is existence (one exists within the womb); then, one is born, one grows, changes, decays, and dies. Inert objects as well go through changes; they wear out or fall apart, and thus die. Each part of creation experiences mutation.

Since everything goes through mutations and modifications, then who is the one who sees all the changes?¹ The one who observes the chair's getting old and unusable need not have the characteristics of the chair. What the observer sees are not his or her characteristics,

1. सूर्यो यथा सर्वलोकस्य चक्षुर्न
लिप्यते चाक्षुषैर्बाह्यदोषैः
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा
न लिप्यते लोकदुःखेन बाह्यः *Kāthopaniṣad II-ii-11*

but the characteristics of the object seen. They are other than the observer.

If I see the six modifications of the body as characteristics of the object seen, then they cannot belong to me, the observer.² Even within my mind, thoughts exist; they surface, they grow and change, they become decayed and die. I have a desire; it comes to mind, I go after it and fulfill it; it changes, become stale, and dies away. Since I can watch the desire come and build, change and die, I cannot be the desire, for the desire rises in my mind, but I am the watcher of desires. For each part of my individuality to go through these modifications, there must be an observer who perceives the constant change.

If desire were the nature of the Self, then I would not be able to give up desire. Since I am the knower of desires and each desire is seen by me, then I am not the desire. All that I can see — all the changes of my body and mind — I can objectify and know. Change cannot exist without the perception of the change. therefore, the modifications are dependent upon my perception of them. In order to know them I must be independent of them. If I underwent a change then I could not have the appreciation of the modification. Since I appreciate this modification, I do not change. Anything which changes has an apparent existence, because as it changes it is dismissed by time. But that which does not change is free of time.

2. न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-
 त्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः
 अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
 न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे

Bhagavadgītā II-20

अस्मिन्मन्त्रे षड्भावविकारा लौकिकवस्तुविक्रिया
 आत्मनि प्रतिषिध्यन्ते । सर्वप्रकारविक्रियारहित
 आत्मेति वाक्यार्थः

*Bhagavadgītā
 Śāṅkara-Bhāṣya II-20*

Verse Fourteen

Doubt:

No separation exists between a modification and the thing which is modified or changed. If the two were separate then the modification would not be upon that particular entity but upon something else. Whenever a modification takes place, the entirety of the modified *entity* must necessarily change. Since both my body and my mind are subject to modification, then the Self must also be subject to these changes.

तेन तेन हि रूपेण
जायते लीयते मुहुः ।
विकारि वस्तु तस्यैषा-
मनुसंधातृता कुतः ॥ १४ ॥

*tena tena hi rūpeṇa
jāyate liyate muhuḥ
vikāri vastu tasyaiṣā-
manusandhātṛtā kutaḥ*

With each form of modification,
Something is created and dissolved,
Again and again.
If one's nature is to see these changes,
How can it be identified
With the modifications?

If the Self changes because changes are taking place, then where exactly do these changes take place? Do they take place in the Self, or is the place of modification other than the Self? If the physical body is now a child's body, enjoying childhood, then the childhood belongs to the physical body. A change takes place, making the body an adolescent one or an old one. The modification of old age and the body are identical, as there is not separation between the modification and the object modified. An object, being always in a state of change, is thus always subject to mutation. Therefore, with each

1. यथा सोम्यैकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं
मृन्मयं विज्ञातं स्याद्वाचारम्भणं विकारो
नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम्

Chândogyopaniṣad VI-i-4

change the previous form is dissolved and a new form is created.¹ These forms are not different from the modification which take place on them.

In order for these modifications to be known, there must be a subject who sees the changes taking place. If that subject also undergoes a change, then there would be no one to recognize the change. Thus, since recognition does take place, there must be a consistent entity which recognizes the changes. This entity cannot be identified with the change *if* recognition is to take place.

Although both the mind and the body are subject to various changes and conditions, a constant exist which does not undergo any of these changes. This constant must be the truth of my nature and not the changing conditions; for the changing conditions come and go and have no permanency to them. Thus, that which does not change can be said to my true nature.

Verse Fifteen

Doubt:

In order to observe changes, the Self need not be a constant entity which does not change. The Self could be changing so quickly, so rapidly, that it appears as constant. On that appearance of a constant entity I observe the changes of my mind and body. Just as a light beam is not in truth a steady column of light but consists of minute particles which give the appearance of a beam, so too the Self is made up of flickers of consciousness, the flow of flickers being so rapid that it appears as a steady beam. The changes are so fast that I am not able to deduce them in myself, but logically I can conclude that the Self changes.

न च स्वजन्म नाशं वा
द्रष्टुमर्हति कश्चन ।
तौ हि प्रागुत्तरभाव-
चरमप्रथमक्षणौ ॥ १५ ॥
na ca svajanma nāsaṃ vā
dṛṣṭumarhati kascana
tau hi prāguttārabhāva
caramaprathamakṣaṇau

No one is able to see
One's own birth and death,
Because birth is the last second
Of prior nonexistence,
And death is the first second
Of posterior nonexistence.

If by logic we try to prove that the Self keeps on changing, then we must say that, with each flicker of consciousness the obtaining Self is dead and another Self is born. If we say that the rapid succession of flickers of consciousness makes any change imperceivable, then we must conclude that consciousness is constantly born and is constantly dying.

What, then, is birth? Birth is the last second of prior nonexistence of a particular thing. When that which *was not* comes into being, we call that event "birth". Then what is death? Death is the first second

of posterior nonexistence: when the nonexistence of a particular thing begins, we call that event "death". These two events, birth and death, naturally involve an observer, for without an observer there is no event. Someone must be there to recognize the occurrence of these two events. If consciousness itself comes and goes, then there is no entity to mark the last second of prior nonexistence or the birth of consciousness itself. If prior to birth, nonexistence alone obtains, then how can we say that consciousness is born? Nothing is there to note the birth.

Similarly, since death is the first second of posterior nonexistence, then in nonexistence alone is death noted. But nonexistence cannot note anything, since it is, by its very definition, nonexistent. In order for birth or death to be noted, one would have to exist prior to one's existence and then would have to exist posterior to one's existence. Thus it becomes contradictory to say that consciousness has a birth and a death with each second.

If I assume the flickers of consciousness to be thoughts, still I cannot take myself to be a thought, for I recognize the beginning, or the birth, of each thought. If I recognize the thought's birth, then I had to exist prior to the existence of the thought. If I take myself to be a thought, then how can I exist prior to the existence of the thought and recognize the thought? I can only exist as consciousness in which the thought is recognized. If I did not exist as consciousness then I could not mark the birth or death of any particular thought. Since these are noted, I can conclude that I exist as consciousness previous to the existence or birth of any thought or modification.

Thus logically we cannot establish that the Self exists as flickers of consciousness, nor do we have any other means of knowledge to arrive at such a conclusion. I know that "I am" previous to any thought or modification. I do not die with the nonexistence of a thought, nor am I born again with the birth of a new thought. As consciousness, I exist even between thoughts.

Verse Sixteen

Doubt:

I don't think it is possible to get rid of my limitations. The scriptures say that all my limitations are born of ignorance of myself and that if I remove the cause of my limitations (ignorance), my limitations will also be removed. When a cause is removed, the effects born of that cause are also removed, as the cloth is burnt upon burning the threads of which it is made. Similarly, when ignorance goes, the effects of that ignorance should also go. But this is not the case. Even though the person with Knowledge has removed ignorance of the Self, still I find that person with a physical body and a mind, both effects of ignorance. The individual still suffers the limitations brought about by identification with the body and the mind. Hunger continues, thirst continues, and even death is not avoided. Either ignorance is not the cause of these limitations, or the cause for these changing limitations must be something else.

Also, if this whole creation is born of ignorance, then it follows that when ignorance is removed, the creation dissolves. But dissolution does not take place upon Self-knowledge. Therefore, no useful result comes from the attainment of Knowledge.

न प्रकाशेऽहमित्युक्ति
र्यत्प्रकाशनिबन्धना
स्वप्रकाशं तमात्मान-
मप्रकाशः कथं स्पृशेत् ॥ १६ ॥
'nā prakāśe'hamityuktir-
yatprakāśanibandhanā
svaparakāśam tamātmāna-
maprakāśaḥ katham sprśet

The sentence
"I do not shine"
Is dependent on Awareness
That Self, which is self-effulgent —
How can ignorance touch it?¹

1. यस्तमसि तिष्ठस्तमसोऽन्तर, यं तमो न वेद,
यस्य तमः शरीरम्, यस्तमोऽन्तरो यमयति,
एष त आत्मान्तर्याम्यमृतः

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad III-vii-13

Actually, ignorance does not exist. If I say, "I do not shine", I mean that I am ignorant of my self-effulgent nature; therefore, I take myself to be a being subject to limitation and change. In order for such a statement to be made, a knowing, sentient entity must be present. If I were totally ignorant or insentient, like a table or a chair, then I could not make such a statement. Knowing that I am ignorant or that I am subject to change is possible only because I am aware of ignorance, or limitation. Thus this very ignorance — thinking that I am subject to change — is dependent upon my Awareness. that Awareness is the nature of *aham*, or "I". No matter what the statement, the very fact that a statement is made reveals the Awareness, myself, which illumines the statement. Therefore I, in the form of Awareness, am self-effulgent.

That Awareness is the content of "I", and everything else is an addition. Awareness is not an adjunct nor does it arise due to any circumstance. It is one's very nature. No adventitious statements about myself can touch that self-effulgence. All statements exist because of Awareness alone, which is free of any conditioned statement.

If I am ignorant, I am conscious of being ignorant: I am Consciousness first; ignorance is secondary. That Consciousness which objectifies the notion "I am ignorant" is not touched by that ignorance. "I am ignorant" is a particular mental modification which takes place within Consciousness. Just as light illumines any opaque object, so too Consciousness illumines ignorance or any other mental modification. As light is not opposed to an opaque object, so too Consciousness is not opposed to ignorance. But the mental modification "I am all Awareness" or "I am Consciousness itself" is opposed to ignorance. Thus the notion of ignorance can be removed by an opposite mental modification. If by the words of the teacher I can appreciate the fact that I am all Knowledge, then my ignorance is removed. Ignorance, therefore, can never be able to touch or cover Consciousness.

Since Awareness is not dependent upon anything, neither ignorance nor any other factor can change its nature. If Awareness were the effect of some particular cause, then once the cause changed, the effect would change. Since it is not an effect, there is no cause or basis which can alter it. Awareness is not born out of circumstances or available only at a particular time. The eyes, for example, may be able to see only at a given time; if the mind is preoccupied, then the eyes do not perceive the immediate objects.

Thus, the eyes or other organs of perception are dependent upon the mind behind them. The mind also depends upon certain conditions for thinking. But Awareness does not depend upon certain conditions for thinking. But Awareness does not depend upon the mind or the sense organs or any other factor because it is self-luminous.² Because of it, mind and other sense organs shine. Since it is self-luminous, it doesn't undergo any change nor can any factor affect it.

² तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति *Kāthopaniṣad II-iii-15*

Verse Seventeen

Doubt:

The doubt which was presented previous to verse sixteen is still being answered in verse seventeen. A doubt can be answered in one of two ways: One can dismiss the doubt by showing that the very premise of the doubt is false; and one can accept it and resolve it. In verse sixteen the doubt was dealt with the first way. Now in verse seventeen, the same doubt is taken into consideration and then dismissed.

तथाप्याभाति कोऽप्येष
विचाराभावजीवनः ।
अवश्यायश्चिदाकाशे
विचारार्कोदयावधिः ॥ १७ ॥
tathāpyābhāti ko' pyeṣa
vicārābhāvajīvanaḥ
avaśyāyaścidākāśe
vicārārkodayavadhiḥ

Even though ignorance is not in
Awareness,
Yet in the absence of inquiry
It seems to appear.
Until the sun of inquiry rises,
The dew of ignorance lives
Within the space of Awareness.

Although ignorance may not affect Awareness, still ignorance is. Ignorance is known to me, just as darkness is known to me. Even when light is not present and I cannot see any objects, I see darkness. I am able to appreciate the fact that there is no light.

Similarly, when I say that ignorance is, that ignorance is known to me. If I am obliged to say that ignorance exists, then I can trace that ignorance or find its basis only in myself. I cannot place ignorance in the physical body or the mind, or the perceptual world because they are products of ignorance. Therefore, if I am to admit to the existence of ignorance, it can only exist within my Awareness.

"I am ignorant" is a notion illumined by Awareness, which is the nature of "I". Therefore, the thought "I am all knowledge, Aware-

ness" will eliminate the notion "I am ignorant". If I do not know what a pot is, the only way I can eliminate the ignorance of pot is to see a pot and have it pointed out to me that "This is a pot". So too, in order to remove the ignorance of myself, I must have a particular thought modification which allows me to know myself as Awareness and which removes any notion of ignorance.

In order to produce this particular thought I must inquire into the nature of myself. Ignorance subsists on the lack of inquiry. As long as I do not question "What is a pot?" the ignorance of pot remains.

Knowledge of myself cannot take place without inquiry. Just as I must use the means of knowledge, my eyes, to see the pot in order to know the object "pot", similarly, in gaining knowledge of myself I must use the appropriate means of knowledge, *pramāṇa*, to grant a condition wherein I am able to eliminate ignorance of myself and appreciate the truth. The words of the teacher function as a means of knowledge to remove that ignorance of myself. If one has listened to this teaching and still ignorance remains, then the intellect has not been adequate to appreciate the teaching and inquiry is not complete for the student. Inquiry must continue until all doubts and errors are removed.

With reflection and contemplation on the teaching, all notions are removed and only the truth of oneself abides.¹ As one who has panned for gold will go on removing all the dirt from the raw lump of gold until only the pure gold remains, so too, one may gain the gold of Knowledge, but along with doubts and various other errors, which must be removed until only the purity of one's Self is seen. Just as dew remains on the grass or a suspended fog appears to envelop formless, shapeless space until the brilliance of the sun's rays disperse the moisture, so too, ignorance remains until it is dispersed by the sun of inquiry.

1. आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो
मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यो मैत्रेयि, आत्मनो
वा अरे दशनिन श्रवणेन मत्या विज्ञानेनेदं
सर्वं विदितम्

Verse Eighteen

Doubt:

The *Karma Kāṇḍa* elaborately describes various rituals and the results of those rituals. Why should it go into such description for an individual who has only an apparent reality? Why should it spend so many pages telling about proper action and improper action and their results? If individuality is only apparent, then the scripture should point out just the Reality.

If this creation, born out of ignorance, has no substantial truth to it, then the entire *Karma Kāṇḍa* becomes useless. How, then, can one portion of the Veda be useful and the other part useless? Vedānta, being part of the Vedas, cannot alone be a means of knowledge. The Veda, in its entirety, must be taken as a means of Knowledge (*pramāṇa*), not just one portion.

आत्माज्ञानमहानिद्रा-

जृम्भितेऽस्मिञ्जगन्मये ।

दीर्घस्वप्ने स्फुरन्त्येते

स्वर्गमोक्षादिविभ्रमाः ॥ १८ ॥

ātmājñānamahānidrā-

jṛmbhite' smiñjaganmaye

dīrghasvapne sphurantyetē

svargamokṣādivibhramāḥ

Delusions like heaven and liberation

Appear in this world,

Which is a long dream

Caused by the great sleep of Self-ignorance.

Does the *Karma Kāṇḍa* become *apramāṇa* before or after Knowledge of Brahman? Before knowledge, it is not useless; after knowledge, it is, of course, useless. The *Śruti* says various things about what the *brahmacārī* has to do. Afterwards, once the *brahmacārī* becomes a householder, all the commands meant for the *brahmacārī* are cancelled. When he becomes a *vānaprastha*, he is relieved of a number of duties that a householder has to perform. Again, if he becomes a renunciate, he is completely released from all duties. The scriptures themselves point this out; thus, at each stage, the por-

tions dealing with the other stages become *apramāṇa*. The entire Veda is a *pramāṇa* only in reference to whom it addresses.

Śruti is a means of knowledge for the one who takes this empirical or transactional reality as absolute.¹ The *Śruti* knows that the empirical world is only apparent, but that it is universally accepted as real. Limitation is taken as real; the attempt to be free of limitation is also real. Therefore, relief must be given to the one who is wanting. The *Śruti* points out all the possibilities of enjoyment that a person may pursue. The *Karma Kāṇḍa* is a means of knowledge for the one who is interested in various results and various forms of experience, including heaven and various spheres of existence after death.

However, the *Karma Kāṇḍa* is not a means of knowledge for the one who has appreciated the limitations of results and of various forms of experience. For such a person, Vedānta is a means of knowledge. Then, after one has understood the apparent nature of limitation, Vedānta is no longer useful to that one. Thereafter, the *Śruti* has nothing to offer, because one is free from any sense of limitation.

If Vedānta itself has nothing to offer the liberated one, how can the *Karma Kāṇḍa*, which addresses the limited person, be useful to such a one? Since the latter portion of the Veda has already given one the knowledge that the world is apparent, that one is free of the limitations of time; Self-ignorance has been destroyed. Therefore, the *Karma Kāṇḍa* is definitely not going to be a means of knowledge for him.

If one wants to attain another sphere of experience, one needs a means of knowledge in order to know how to attain it. If one wants liberation, one needs to know how to obtain freedom. The desire for varied experience or for liberation exists only before knowledge. When one knows oneself to be forever free — free from bondage and free from experience — then one no longer needs a means of knowledge. Thus a *pramāṇa* is useful only for one who does not know.

The ignorance of one's Self is like a great, long sleep that is present even while one is awake. From beginningless time this sleep has existed; from it, the creation is projected. When one is asleep (in the

1. तमेतमविद्यारूपमात्मानात्मनोरितरेतराद्यासं

पुरस्कृत्य सर्वे प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारा

लौकिकाः प्रवृत्ताः सर्वाणि च

शास्त्राणि विधिप्रतिषेधमोक्षपराणि

Brahmasūtra

Śāṅkara-Bhāṣya (Introduction)

usual sense) and wakes up only partially — not to the physical world but to one's memories alone — the experience is called dream. Ignorant of the waking world, the dreamer creates a subtle world for himself. However, in this projection which we call the waking state, the creation is a "lengthened dream". Once awake, one shakes off the usual kind of dream easily, but this "lengthened dream" continues for some time. In the dream anything that appears is delusory: the dream tiger that one is afraid of, the dream gold that one runs after. Similarly, in this lengthened dream, the various means that one adopts and the various ends which one wants to gain are all illusions.

As the dreams and the dreamer are false, so also the waking and waker are false. The waker, the *samsāri*, makes an attempt to get this or that. The attempt is false and the end is false. All the false notions appear valid as long as one is under the spell: whatever the experience, it is real. When one gets out of the spell, all that was experienced becomes unreal — just as one shakes off the dream upon waking up in the morning, even though, during the spell of the dream, it was experienced as very real. So too, within the experiences of this creation, happiness is real, misery is real, desires are real — as long as one is under the spell.

How does this waking world differ from the dream world? The waking state has an objective reality, whereas the dream enjoys only a subjective reality. While awake, one knows that one is imagining, whereas in dream one does not know that one is imagining. This is the only difference between ordinary imagination in the waking state and the imagination that is operating in the dream state. Even though in both cases the mind is merely spinning, still one feels that one is truly undergoing experiences while in the dream. Whereas in the dream there is a self-forgetfulness, in waking, one is conscious of one's imagination.

In dream, when I come to appreciate that I am dreaming, that appreciation is a sign of waking. Similarly, when I say, "When will I get out of *samsāra*?" I show some signs of waking. While under the spell, I cannot do anything. However, if I happen to discern the fact

2. यत्र वान्यदिव स्यात्, तत्रान्योऽन्यत्पश्येत्
 अन्योऽन्यज्जिघ्रेत् अन्योऽन्यद्रसयेत्,
 अन्योऽन्यद्वदेत्, अन्योऽन्यच्छृणुयात्,
 अन्योऽन्यन्मन्वीत्, अन्योऽन्यत्स्पृशेत्,
 अन्योऽन्यद्विजानीयात्

that everything is only goading me to continue in the same vicious circle, that I am only giving new momentum to it, then I have come to question the spell. For the one who is still under the spell, who still wants happiness from the world and from experiences, the *Karma Kāṇḍa* is the answer.

Both Vedānta and the *Karma Kāṇḍa* are means of knowledge for the *samsārī* — neither is a means of knowledge for the wise man. "Whom do they address?" is the question. If a person seeks liberation, then Vedānta alone is the means of knowledge. As a *pramāṇa*, it dismisses the world as being apparent. An apparent or false thing need not be dismissed at all if it is seen as apparent; but until it is seen as apparent, it has to be dismissed. Therefore, the *Śruti* becomes a means of knowledge for dismissing what is false and showing what is real. The entire *Śruti* is a *pramāṇa* — a means of knowledge for keeping the spell going for the one who doesn't feel a longing to break the spell — and also for helping one to get out of the spell if one wishes to.

3. छन्दांसि यज्ञाः क्रतवा व्रतानि
भूतं भव्यं यच्च वेदा वदन्ति
अस्मान् मायी सृजते विश्वमेत-
त्तस्मिश्चान्यो मायया सन्निरुद्धः *Svetāśvataropaniṣad IV-9*

Verse Nineteen

Doubt:

If *Ātmā* is one — one Awareness — then why do I experience the world as though I were an enjoyer and the world were an object to be enjoyed? The objects are inert, and I, the enjoyer, am a sentient being. Therefore, there are two entities: the sentient and the insentient. How do you account for this difference if *Ātmā* is one?

जडाजडविभागोऽय-

मजडे मयि कल्पितः ।

भित्तिभागे समे चित्र-

चराचरविभागवत् ॥ १९ ॥

jadājaḍavibhāgo' ya-
majaḍe mayi kalpitaḥ
bhittibhāge same citra-
carācaravibhāgavat

As the division into sentient and insentient forms

Is created on one even canvas,

So too, this division into sentient and insentient

Is imagined in me, the Awareness.

In dream, a person, being sentient, creates a dream world: an inert mountain as well as a sentient human being. From one mind alone both the sentient snake on an inert rope. On the other hand, a sentient snake can also be taken for an inert rope. Both the inert and the sentient can be imposed upon each other. The human being is capable of any super imposition — this is what is called *Māyā*.¹

The mind is the platform for the projection of the whole dream

1. स वा अयमात्मा ब्रह्म विज्ञानमयो
मनोमयः प्राणमयश्चक्षुर्मयः श्रोत्रमयः
पृथिवीमय आपोमयो वायुमय आकाश-
मयस्तेजोमयोऽस्तेजोमयः काममयोऽकाममयः
क्रोधमयोऽक्रोधमयो धर्ममयोऽधर्ममयः
सर्वमयस्तद्यदेतदिदंमयोऽदोमय इति

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad IV-iv-5

world. In the dream, I am the enjoyer with objects to enjoy. Both the enjoyer and the enjoyed, being products of my mind, are imposed upon Consciousness. Both are thoughts which are modifications of Consciousness. The imagined duality, of enjoyer and enjoyed, resolves into one Consciousness. The differences are created, not real.

On a plain canvas, whose top, middle, and bottom are one even surface, is portrayed a running horse, a tree, and a mountain. The tree and the mountain are motionless, whereas the horse looks as though it were moving. Upon one surface both the sentient and insentient are seen. Similarly, upon the one Consciousness various forms will resolve into one Consciousness, one Awareness alone. The object is in Awareness; the experience is in Awareness; the one who experiences it is in Awareness — all three have their being only in Awareness and cannot exist separate from Awareness. Since they can be resolved into Awareness, their differences are imagined. Therefore, the division of enjoyer and enjoyed is only an apparent creation.

Verse Twenty

Doubt:

Identifying *Ātmā* with *Parambrahman* is not proper. If you say that *Ātmā* is a witness, then the existence of two things is implied: one is the witness, and the other is what is witnessed, which is the entire world. Thus the definition of *Ātmā* involves a world which has to be witnessed. *Ātmā*, then, enjoys a different reality than that of *Brahman*, the Total, the Absolute. *Ātmā* may be a part of *Brahman*, but it cannot be the Total. *Brahman* is defined as nondual, neither inside nor outside, whereas this *Ātmā*, being the witness, must be distinct from the object which it witnesses. Thus, there is no identity between *Ātmā* and *Parabrahman*.

चेत्योपरागरूपा मे
साक्षितापि न तात्त्विकी ।
उपलक्षणमेवेयं
निस्तारङ्गचिदम्बुधेः ॥ २० ॥
cetyoparāgarūpā me
sākṣitāpi na tāttvikī
upalakṣaṇameveyaṁ
nistarāṅgacidambudheḥ

Being the witness
Is a relative definition.
It is not the truth of my nature,
For I am the ocean of Awareness,
Free from all waves.

The entire world as well as the notion of doership is something that is seen. "I am the doer" is known. All that is done by the doer, all experiences, are known. The one who knows all this is the *sākṣi*, the witness. However, this quality of being a witness is not real. In fact, *Ātmā* is not a witness. In order to appreciate the Self as free from the seer-seen relationship, *Ātmā* is pointed to as a witness; but there is not act of witnessing on the part of *Ātmā*.

Ātmā is free of thought because it is the very content of the thought-form (*vr̥tti*). In and through the wave is the water of the ocean: the ocean is the very content of the wave. The wave can

break, can change form; yet the water is not affected, for it is free from the changing form of the wave. The wave is only apparent.

So too, Consciousness is in and through any thought modification — unaffected by the changing form of the thought.

Due to a thought modification, a difference between the knower and known exists. In order to objectify these two thought-forms of knower and known, we say that there is a witness. But nothing is actually witnessed because both thought-forms are apparent. No connection exists between the apparent and the real. Only from a particular standpoint is the *Ātmā* said to be a witness. With reference to an object or an action, *Ātmā* itself is free from objects. In order to remove the notion of duality, *Ātmā* is said to be nondual. Because there is a notion of bondage, *Ātmā* is pointed out as being always free. Thus, to remove notions, *Ātmā* is implied in various ways. Through this technique one appreciates the true nature of the Self. Thus, the word witness is used only to point out the Self, which is free from all objects and from the notion of doership — the Self free from all waves of thought.

Verse Twenty-One

Doubt:

I cannot say that I am *Brahman*, unaffected by changes, for I am affected by changes. I have likes and dislikes: I become happy and sorrowful. These changes affect my nature so I cannot be *Brahman*, who is changeless.

अमृताब्देर्न मे जीर्णिः

र्मषाडिण्डीरजन्मभिः ।

स्फटिकाद्रेर्न मे रागः

स्वाप्रसंध्याभ्रविभ्रमैः ॥ २१ ॥

amṛtābderna me jīrṇir

mṛṣāḍiṇḍīrajanmabhiḥ

sphaṭikādrerna me rāgaḥ

svāpnasamdhyaābhra vibhramaiḥ

I, who am an ocean of immortality,
Am not affected by birth,
Just as the waves
Do not affect the ocean;
Nor is the crystal mountain
Touched by the hues
Of the moving clouds of the evening.

The ocean is not affected by the froth or foam or waves on top of it. They are the glories of the ocean, neither increasing it nor decreasing it. The ocean remains unaffected by the changes on its surface.

Similarly, any number of creations can take place in me, but I remain the same all the time. Any number of births can take place, yet I am not changed. The basis of a superimposition is not affected by that superimposition, for the apparent does not alter the true substance.¹ The changes of birth, sustenance, and death do not

1. तस्मादविद्यामात्रं संसारो यथादृष्टविषय
एव । न क्षेत्रज्ञस्य केवलस्याविद्या तत्कार्यं च ।
न च मिथ्याज्ञानं परमार्थवस्तु दूषयितुं
समर्थम् । न ह्युपरदेशं स्नेहेन पङ्कीकर्तुं
शक्नोति मरीच्युदकं तथाऽविद्या क्षेत्रज्ञस्य
न किञ्चित्कर्तुं

Bhagavadgītā XIII-2
Śāṅkara-Bhāṣya

for any reason affect the basis, *Brahman*.

The mind may have a like or a dislike which may reflect upon me, but it is not me. In the evening the moving clouds gain a glow from the golden hue of the sun. One moment they are orange, then crimson. An icy, snowcapped mountain reflects the changing colours of the clouds. Although the ice does not change colour, it appears as changing due to the reflection of the changing colours in the moving clouds. The mountain is not connected to or associated with these various moving clouds. So too, I am not connected or associated with these various changes of my mind. I may look as though I change, but in fact, I am a mountain of pure crystal; I am Awareness.

The variations of the mind do not bring about any intrinsic change upon the mountain of Awareness that I am. Moment to moment, I may appear to lose my crystalline clarity and look as if I am covered by a colour, crimson or blue, but I am not transfigured at all. the mountain always continues to be pure snow. If it truly changes, then it would continue to be that colour, but it returns to white — always maintaining white. If the variation is taken as the true colour of the mountain, then one has not understood the characteristics of snow. For the knowledgeable person, the changing colours give an additional beauty to the icy mountain. So too, with the knowledge of the Self, the changing colours of my mind are only a beautiful display of nature.

Verse Twenty-Two

Doubt:

I accept that *Brahman* is identical with *Ātmā* (the Self) but I see that *Brahman* has three qualities *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. If it has three qualities, then the Self also enjoys qualities like any other object. In order for qualities to exist, there has to be a locus on which the qualities exist — as, for example, “blueness”, a quality of the pot, abides in the pot, as “tallness” abides in the tree. If these three qualities abide in the Self, by their change the Self will change. Enjoying qualities, the Self becomes a substance, subject to destruction.

स्वरूपमेव मे सत्त्वं
न तु धर्मो न भस्त्ववत् ।
मदन्यस्य सतोऽभावा-
न्न हि सा जातिरिष्यते ॥ २२ ॥
svarūpameva me sattvam
na tu dharmo na bhastvavat
madanyasya sato' bhāvan-
na hi sā jātirīṣyate

Existence is indeed my nature,
Not a quality,
As spaceness is not a quality
Of space.
Myself, Existence,
Alone is.
A species of Existence is not possible.

The Self does not have the quality of existence — it is Existence. From one standpoint, it is called *sat*, Existence. Existence is the basis on which everything is. All has its being in Existence alone: All resolves into Existence alone. That Existence does not differ, nor is it many. There is only one Existence. Pot existence, cloth existence, tree existence — a form may qualify Existence, but Existence is one alone.

Wherever there is a quality, there must be a species or a category to provide a locus on which the quality exists. Since the Self is one, there is no category or species for it, as there is no category or species

for space. Nor is there a grouping for space or a union with space — there is no second space. So too, there is not a second thing apart from the Self, Existence.

Space may appear conditioned due to certain factors within it. Enclosed by four walls, it is room space; within a pot, it is pot space. A particular form which is given a name, "room" or "pot", apparently limits the space. But space itself is not truly conditioned by these names and forms; space remains one. So too, any number of objects can exist: The pot is, the room is, he is, she is, I am (is), you are (is) — but there is not a variety of is's. Various names and forms are there, but all depend on Existence for their appearance. Everything is because Existence is.¹

Existence, therefore, is a principle which does not depend upon another existing factor. Being independent, it is the very nature of the Self and not a quality of the Self.

1. सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् *Chândogyopaniṣad VI-ii-1*

2. स य, एषोऽणिमैतदाम्यमिदं सर्वं
तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि
श्वेतकेतो इति

Ibid. VI-viii-7

Verse Twenty-Three

Doubt:

Thus, Existence is the *Ātmā* the Self, but Awareness must be a quality, for I have the characteristic of knowing. That knowingness is a quality. If *Brahman* is free of qualities, it cannot be the Self, for the Self has this quality of awareness, this capacity to know.

स्वरूपमेव मे ज्ञानं
न गुणाः स गुणो यदि ।
अनात्मत्वमसत्त्वं वा
ज्ञेयाज्ञेयत्वयोः पतेत् ॥ २३ ॥
svarūpameva me jñānaṁ
na guṇaḥ sa guṇo yadi
anātmatvamsattvam va
jñeyājñeyatvayoḥ patet

Awareness is my nature,
Not a quality.
If it is a quality,
Then that which is known
Is not the Self,
And that which is not known
Is not existent.

One may argue that Awareness or Knowledge cannot be the nature of the Self, for awareness comes and goes. In sleep there is no awareness; even during waking, awareness differs according to the perceptions one has of objects. Therefore, awareness cannot be identical with the Self, which is Existence. It can only be an adventitious quality.

To this we answer that Awareness does not come and go — only a particular thought modification comes and goes. A thought happens within Awareness as a clay pot happens within space. Within Awareness alone, the thoughts are formed and again fall. Awareness always is; it is not distinct from Existence.

1. ज्ञान शब्देन तल्लक्ष्यते न तूच्यते
शब्दप्रवृत्तिहेतुजात्यादिधर्मरहितत्वात्
Taittirīyopaniṣad II-i-1
Sāṅkara-Bhāṣya

Verse Twenty-Four

Doubt:

I can see that the Self is Existence and Awareness, for no one tries to become aware or existent; everyone is existent and aware. However, everyone does want to become happy; therefore, happiness must be other than myself. I find happiness in the world and not in myself; I depend on the world for my satisfaction. Only in association with certain things do I become happy. As milk gains in the quality of coffee in association with it, I too, gain the quality of happiness in association with certain objects. Since happiness is a quality which my mind enjoys depending on objects and situations, it cannot be my nature.

अहमेव सुखं नान्य-

दन्यच्चेन्नैव तत्सुखम् ।

अमदर्थं न हि प्रेयो

मदर्थं न स्वतः प्रियम् ॥ २४ ॥

ahameva sukham nānya-

danyaccennaiva tatsukham

amadartham na hi preyo

madartham na svataḥ priyam

I am happiness, independent of anything

Anything other does not bring happiness

Love is not towards others;

Nor can I love myself,

For I am love.¹

If my nature is not happiness, then to what does this quality belong? If it belongs to something other than myself, then how can I ever become happy or full? In a moment of joy I say "I am happy". The happiness is not with the object or the situation. If it were, then that object or situation would be a source of happiness for everyone. Also, if happiness were a quality inherent in objects, then one would desire all objects. Yet every object is not desirable to me. I love only those objects which bring me happiness. I do not love the objects, but I love the happiness which the object brings. Happiness

1. See Verse Two, note 4.

then, cannot be a quality inherent in the object.

Since happiness cannot be a quality of the object, can it then be a quality of the mind? If it were a quality of the mind, then I would not seek a condition to induce happiness within the mind. The sense of completion, which is happiness, would be the mind's happiness. The mind, however, assumes itself to be incomplete and then seeks completion. Since the mind seeks completion outside of itself, happiness cannot be its intrinsic quality.

Also, if happiness were a quality of the mind, then when the mind was resolved as in deep sleep, happiness would be dismissed. Experience shows the reverse to be true. Deep sleep is a state of experience which all of us desire to enter because of the sense of completion obtained there. When the mind is resolved, happiness manifests. Thus, happiness cannot be a quality of the individual mind.

If happiness is not a quality of the object nor a quality of the individual mind, then from where does it come? Happiness appears when a particular condition is induced within the mind. When a desired object is obtained, then the desiring mind is granted a calm moment. The love expressed as I encounter a desired object is able to resolve projections in my mind, thus allowing me to be with myself. When a particular desire within the mind is resolved, then the fullness which is my nature appears. Fullness, which is love, is but the nature of the Self.²

2. यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नाल्पे

सुखमस्ति भूमैव सुखं *Chandogyopaniṣad VII-xxii-1*

Verse Twenty-Five

Doubt:

Perhaps *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* are not qualities, but definitely they are three distinct things. The *Śruti* says that *Brahman* is one, but you are mentioning three things. Therefore, *Brahman* consists of three things, not one.

न हि नानास्वरूपं स्या-
देकं वस्तु कदाचन ।
तस्मादखण्ड एवास्मि
विजहज्जगतीं भिदाम् ॥ २५ ॥
*na hi nānāsvārūpaṁ syā-
dekam vastu kadācana
tasmādakhaṇḍa evāsmi
vijahajjāgatīm bhidām*

That which is one
Can never, at any time, be varied.
Therefore,
I am undivided,
Giving up
Any divisions brought about by the world.¹

Three approaches exists, but not three separate entities; for *sat* is *cit* and *sat-cit* is *ānanda*: they are not distinct. From the stand-point of a relative existence we point out *sat*, that which has timeless existence. From the standpoint of awareness conditioned by a knower/known relationship, we point out *cit*, Awareness free from this duality. By analyzing happiness gained by the attainment of a desired object, we find an object-free fullness, *ānanda*. These are all one: Existence free from time, Awareness free from duality, and Fullness free from desire. They all resolve into the Absolute, therefore, Awareness and Existence are the same; they are not distinct.

The same reasoning holds true for fullness, *ānanda*. Fullness

1. एतेभ्यो भूतेभ्यः समुत्थाय तान्येवानु-
विनश्यति, न प्रेत्य संज्ञास्तीत्यरे
ब्रवीमीति होवाच याज्ञवल्क्यः

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cannot be away from Awareness and Existence; for if it were, then no one could have the experience "I am happy". Since happiness is experienced as the subject, then it cannot be away from the Awareness which is the subject. Therefore, the nature of that very subject is Awareness, Existence, and Fullness.

This nature of the Self is one; it is not manifold.² The varieties which go to make up the world, divided by time, space, and objectivity, do not abide within me, the Self. When I give up the divisions brought about by the world, I am one, undivided, which we call *sat-cit-ānanda*, *Brahman*.

Only one "thing" is:³ No second thing exists. Apart from *Brahman*, there is no other substance. Any item that I examine within the creation breaks down into various parts. For example, if I examine a car, I see no one thing there: the item "car" will break down into a collection of various components. The tire is not the car, nor is the fender, nor the steering wheel, nor the gasoline; yet all the components together make the aggregate "car". Even each of these components can be further broken down into other parts. This analogy holds true for any item within the creation. Therefore, when I start analyzing, I cannot arrive at any one substance within the creation, for each is an aggregate of parts. No one thing has any true existence within itself. Then, that existence which is, is the only thing that is.

Existence cannot be distinct from Awareness, for if existence were distinct from Awareness, then it would become insentient. If insentient, then it would become an object. If an object, then it would enjoy name and form, and thus become subject to dismissal as apparent. Therefore, it would lose its original definition as that which is in all three periods of time. So Existence cannot be different from Awareness.

The converse is also true, that Awareness cannot be distinct from Existence. If it were distinct, then it would be away from the existence Self (*sadātmā*). If it were away from the Self, then it would become an inert object, thus negating the very definition of Awareness: sentiency.

2. मनसैवानुद्रष्टव्यं नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन
मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति *Ibid. IV-iv-19*

3. एकधैवानुद्रष्टव्यमेतदप्रमेयं ध्रुवम्
विरजः पर आकाशादज आत्मा महान्ध्रुवः *Ibid. IV.iv.20*

Verse Twenty-Six

Introduction:

This verse is a summation of the teaching.

परोक्षतापरिच्छेद-
शाबल्यापोहनिर्मलम् ।
तदासीति गिरा लक्ष्य-
महमेकरसं महः ॥ २६ ॥
- *parokṣatāpariccheda-*
śābalyāpoha nirmalaṁ
tadasīti girā lakṣya-
mahamekarasaṁ mahāḥ

I am one limitless Essence
Which is implied through the *Mahāvākya*
I am pure, free from ignorance.
My nature is not distinct nor limited.¹

The summation of the teaching called Vedānta is given with a sentence which reveals the identity between the individual and the Total. Such a sentence is called a *Mahāvākya*. One such sentence is *tat-tvam-asi*: "that thou art". *Tat*, "that", stands for the Lord, the Creator who is all-knowing and all-powerful. The word *tvam*, "you", represents the individual who has only limited knowledge and limited power. The identity between the two is appreciated when the distinguishing factors are seen as apparent conditionings. In the removal of these conditionings one appreciates that only one substance, Consciousness alone, is there.

The qualities of the Lord and the individual are contradictory. The Lord, as any author of a particular creation, has complete knowledge of the creation which he authored. As a pot-maker has complete knowledge of the pot — how it is made and its functional purpose — so too, the *Śruti* reveals that the creator has the knowledge of the formation of the creation and all the laws that govern the operational aspects of the creation. Since this creation is purposeful and functional, one can reason that there is an intelligent cause which authored it. That intelligent cause is that which has the full

1. See Verse Twenty-Two, note 2.

knowledge of its creation.

As an individual within the creation it is impossible to know the creation in its entirety. Such a knowledge would comprise all sciences and all disciplines, plus all that which has not yet been revealed by science or explained within any discipline. Such a knowledge is simply not possible. How, then, can there be an identity between the Creator and the individual?

The identity is not within the qualities or factors which make up each entity, but in the removal of these qualities and factors. The Awareness by which the Creator knows His total knowledge is the same Awareness by which I, an individual, know my limited areas of knowledge. There is no differentiation in Awareness. The distinctions are only in the capacity of knowing, but not in the Awareness which enables one to know. This Awareness is *sat*, "real", in it the individual, the Lord and the creation have their being. Being one basic truth, the "threeness" of *sat-cit-ānanda* becomes apparent. Therefore, I am that Awareness which is the Lord and also his creation; I am not different from Him.

Verse Twenty-Seven

उपशान्तजगज्जीव-
शिष्याचार्येश्वरभ्रमम् ।
स्वतः सिद्धमनाद्यन्तं
परिपूर्णमहं महः ॥ २७ ॥

*upaśāntajagajjīva-
śiṣyācāryeśvarabhramam
svataḥ.siddhamanādyantam
paripūrṇamaham mahah*

The delusion about the world,
The individual and the Lord,
The student and the teacher
Is resolved.
I am limitless,
Without beginning and endless.
The Self is established.
I am complete.

Through inquiry I have destroyed Self-ignorance. I took myself to be limited and sorrowful and subject to destruction. I have negated what is not true and have destroyed the delusions about myself and the world.¹ I thought that I was an individual separate from the world, but now I know that the apparent world exists within me, the Awareness. One can negate an error or a false perception, as I can negate the perception of a snake by seeing the rope, but the perception of the rope cannot be negated, for it is the actual image. When the reflection in the mirror is understood as reflection then any destruction to the reflection does not destroy me. The reflection in the mirror is a false perception of the actual face. Even if I stand in a hallway of mirrors and see thousands of images of my own form, still I know each of them is a reflection of one form. Perceptually I see a number of figures, but I know that I have one physical body. If I look in a concave mirror or a convex mirror, I will see mutations of my form. However, I never lose the knowledge that what I am

1. एतमानन्दमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य

इमाँल्लोकान्कामात्री कामरूप्यमनुसंचरन् *Taittiriyaopaniṣad II-x-5*

seeing are reflections of one physical body.

When I have discriminated between the false perceptions of myself — my identification with my body or the thoughts in my mind — and the truth of myself as Awareness, then I am no longer under the spell of ignorance or delusion. I know that the truth of perceived world is Awareness, not distinct from me, but abiding within me. Nor am I distinct from the teacher who teaches this truth, for the teacher teaches within Awareness. The Lord, also, cannot stand separate from Awareness, for the Author of creation must create with Awareness; He is aware of His creation. The Awareness with which He perceives His creation cannot be distinct from the Awareness which is myself. As Awareness I am not bound by the confinements of the world, but am free from any limitation of time and space.

The one who knows oneself to be free from the time/space framework, knows oneself to be limitless. Such a one is liberated. No longer does one search for happiness for one knows that the Self is the truth of one's happiness; the mind abides with the Self alone. The fear of mortality falls for one knows that the Self does not die nor is subject to destruction. By inquiry one has eliminated the ignorance about oneself and this knowledge removes the quest for all particular knowledge.

The three basic problems inherent in man, the longing for happiness, the fear of mortality, and the desire for knowledge, all resolve in the truth of one's Self. The one who knows this without doubt or error is full and complete.

Verse Twenty-Eight

As a Vedantic text begins with a humble invocation of the Lord's Grace, it ends praising that Grace which has come in the form of knowledge.

लक्ष्मीधरकवेः सूक्ति-
शरदम्भोजसंभृतः ।
अद्वैतमकरन्दोऽयं
विद्वद्भूषैर्निपीयताम् ॥ २८ ॥
*lakṣmīdharakaveḥ sūkti-
śaradambhojasam bhṛtaḥ
advaitamakarando 'yaṁ
vidvadbhūṣairnīpiyatām*

May this nectar of non-duality
Available in the lotus words
Of Lakṣmīdhara Kavi
Be ever enjoyed
By the wise,
Who are like bees.

The verses of this text are compared to the fragrant lotus blossoms. The lotus has a nectar which is sweet and attracts all bees. The nectar (*makaranda*) of this text is nonduality (*advaita*). As bees come to relish and enjoy the nectar of the lotus, so too, may the wise ones come to drink and enjoy this nectar of nonduality. As the essence of the flower maintains the bee, the essence of this text, the truth of one's Self, maintains the wise.

As the bee must have the dexterity to procure the honey which is kept deep inside the flower, so too one must develop the capacity of inquiry in order to discover the truth of one's Self.¹ It is not a problem of dialectics or semantics, but it is a problem of ignorance,

1. इहैव सन्तोऽथ विद्वस्तद्वयम्
न चेदवेदिमहती विनष्टिः
ये तद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति
अथेतरे दुःखमेवापियन्ति

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad IV-iv-14

and inquiry alone can remove the ignorance.² Inquiry is the means to the understanding of one's Self and one inquires until all ignorance is gone.

2. आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य
लब्ध्वाऽऽश्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः *Kāthopanīṣad I-ii-7*





ADVAITA MAKARANDA

Ann Berliner

Advaita-makaranda is an obscure text written most likely between the 11th and 15th centuries by Laksmudhara. He has written one other text, *Bhagavannamakaumudī* as well as a *tika* to the *Srīmad Bhagavatam* called *Amrtataranginī*.

The author purposely avoided the misuse of such vague terms as "eternal", "soul", "spirit", "ego", etc. Such words, filled with cultural and psychological interpretations, can be misleading. In the first reading the verses may seem very simple, but it is a deceptive simplicity. The simplicity is only in the controlled lack of adjectives and not in the presentation of the subject matter.

In the body of the commentary the author places herself in the position of a traditionalist and presents the matter from a traditionalist's point of view. The author has tried to understand this approach by the study of various Vedantic texts under the guidances of teachers who are part of the tradition. As is the wont with traditionalists, they resolve the subject matter of each verse into understanding of the limitless Self.

Within the tradition a particular argument is substantiated by quoting from the *Sastra* (*Upanisads, Brahma-Sutras, Bhagvād-Gīta*). The author has emulated this classical approach by footnoting the philosophical arguments with quotations from the *Sastra*.

The introduction to each verse presents the *purvapaksa* while the verse and commentary reveal the *siddhanta*. When the verse is a continuation of the *siddhānta*, no *purvapaksa* precedes it.

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